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THE REJECTED.

BY A. Y. R.

It was here you stood, and a week has gone,
  There's a deeper tinge in the hyacinth's pink;
The grass is greener upon the lawn,
  Your eyes are smiling, and yet I think—
O woman heart!—that they see but ill
  The spot where my venturous hope was slain:
Do I blame you, then? Nay, I bless you still,
  'Mid the pangs of loss for the small, sweet gain.

I bless your hand for its gentle touch,
  Your voice for its calm, low tones that day,
That kept me from feeling overmuch
  The sting of the words you had to say.
In your eyes there gathered a tender mist,
  On your lips the pity was half divine;
Oh, never a beautiful hope was kissed
  To its death so sweetly as this of mine!

Blame? Nay, if a blossomless tree could mistake
  A flower, wind-blown, from some garden afar,
For its own white beauty, and grow for its sake,
  Proud and happy as crowned ones are—
Could it chide the flower for its own fond cheat,
  When the alien withered and drooped and fell?
So I bury my dead hopes here at our feet,
  With only a blessing—Sweetheart, farewell!

TIFF.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A GREAT MISTAKE," "ROSE OF THE WORLD," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.—[CONTINUED.]

THEY were admitted by a smiling nurse in a white cap, who welcomed Miss Masserene back, and begged them to give themselves the trouble to walk upstairs.

The staircase was quite dark.

The young people stumbled up as best they could, following the abominable strains of the fiddle.

The open door of the dancing-room was thronged with admiring relatives, who were sitting about and chatting while the lesson went on.

Kind, stout Madame Riviere caught sight of Ninon, and made her way out unseen.

She was very glad evidently to see the young beauty back again, and kissed her on both cheeks in a motherly way that won Dick's heart.

"I venture to bring you my cousin dear Madame Riviere," said Ninon, presenting Dick.

"And you have done well, my dear"—cordially.

"Monsieur is very welcome to our little evening.

"I hope you will both do me the pleasure to remain and take a cup of tea when the lesson shall be finished.

"It is nearly over. We are about to descend."

"Don't say a word to Tiffany, pray, madame," pleaded Ninon, in a smiling whisper. "She does not expect me, and she would go wild and upset everything. My cousin and I will peep over people's heads. We can see very well."

Madame Riviere was reluctant to leave her guests on such an uncomfortable place as the landing; but she was also eager to give her order for additional cups and saucers; and, with many charming apologies, she went down-stairs, leaving the cousins in their quiet corner.

"There is Tiff," whispered Ninon joyfully, "sitting on the floor in the corner by the farther window, Dick!"

"One, two, three, four, five, six!" shouted the little professor, scraping his fiddle and stamping his feet to mark the time. "Mademoiselle Adele, attention, if you please. Monsieur Joseph, do not play the monkey, I beg, at this moment. Mark well the time. Hold well the feet."

It was a waltz.

Boys and girls, young men and maidens danced it singly, circling one after another in a great ring round the room, and audibly counting the time, which they likewise stamped with vigor, making noise enough almost to drown the little professor's performance of the "Bon Soir" waltz.

There was a little chorus of remarks from the mutual admiration society at the front door.

"Oh, but Monsieur Alphonse is graceful!" one proud mother exclaimed to another who, not to be outdone in politeness, returned in a deep deprecating way—

"You think so, madame? But it is Mademoiselle Clemence who holds herself to perfection."

"You are too kind, madame! And the little Mathilde then! What agility at her age! What attention! That child will undoubtedly go far in what she attempts."

Dick and Ninon exchanged glances of amusement.

The noise was bewildering, the heat overpowering, in spite of the one open window, which was all that French indifference to fresh air would concede.

It must have been a relief to all concerned when, with a last violent flourish, the little master declared the lesson at an end for that evening.

He put his fiddle into the case, which he carefully deposited on the mantelpiece.

The pupils began to chatter as he left the room with a series of the most graceful bows to everybody, including the two on the half-lit landing, whom he could hardly make up his mind to pass until he had persuaded them to enter.

"Is he gone?" cried Adele Riviere, running to the window to listen. "Yes—there goes the hall door! Now, Tiphaine, quick then!"

Dick saw an ugly little frizzy-haired girl with a merry face jump up from a corner on the floor and go to the violin-case.

"Dear old Tiff!" whispered Ninon, softly pinching Dick's arm. "Doesn't she look happy?"

"Ahem!" cried Tiff, who was skillfully holding the violin, and now rapped on it sharply with her bow.

"Young ladies, young gentleman, attention please—the lesson is about to commence!"

There was a roar of laughter.

The words were an exact imitation of the little professor.

Tiff herself stood as solemn as a judge; and then, as the young people gaily took their places, she began to play the "Bon Soir" waltz horribly out of tune, and with a spirited and comical travesty of poor Monsieur Pasdeloup's unhappy method.

Every one laughed again and put their fingers in their ears, and then Tiffany laughed too, and broke off.

Monsieur Riviere, who was as kind and as stout as his wife, came up and begged every one to descend to the saloon where tea was awaiting them.

Every one obeyed with alacrity.

As the mothers and aunts and pupils filled out Ninon pulled poor Dick back into the shade.

No one noticed them in the half-light and with tea in prospect down-stairs.

"Who taught her to play the violin?" whispered Dick.

"She taught herself, I suppose. I do not know. Oh, Dick, listen!"

Only Tiffany and Adele Riviere were left in the room.

The girl began to play again—the "Ave Maria" of Gounod—in long-sustained notes of admirable purity and accuracy.

The sweet sounds filled the room, unheard by the chattering throng on the stairs to whom Madame Riviere was holding a lamp from below, to light their downward progress.

Ninon held her breath until the splendid soaring climax of the melody had been reached and the last notes were throbbing slowly away.

Then she said softly, "Tiff;" and put her charming pale face in at the door.

There was a shriek, the fiddle was flung wildly down, and Tiffany rushed into her sister's open arms.

Adele Riviere, unconscious of the presence of a young man, began to dance and to clap her hands in sympathy; and the three girls began to talk at once as fast as they could.

Dick looked on amused.

It was not until Joseph Riviere came running up-stairs to call them indignantly down to tea that Ninon was reminded of Mr. Strong's presence.

Then she effected a gay little introduction.

Tiffany frankly shook hands with her cousin, and looked at him from head to foot with her shrewd hazel eyes.

Mademoiselle Adele dropped her black lashes and made a proper little curtsey, and grew suddenly mute, as became a carefully trained French girl, hardly venturing to say more than "Yes sir." "No sir," as they all followed Joseph down-stairs.

Some of the pupils and their parents had taken their leave; but enough remained to make quite a little party in the wine-merchant's drawing-room.

Two cousins of Adele, grown-up young ladies who were staying with her on a visit, were helping, Madame Riviere to carry round the tea and the biscuits and the little decanter of rum with which some of the aunts and mothers liked to flavor the mild decoction, which certainly had but little of its own.

Dick saw that the lads who had been dancing, and a young court-officer in a blue uniform and immaculate white gloves, who had come in search of his sister, were seated while the two young ladies with demure smiles waited upon them as well as upon every one else.

Nevertheless the young men rose with much politeness when Mademoiselle Adele and her two guests made their appearance with Joseph, and remained standing until seats had been found for Miss Masserene and her sister.

Ninon's entrance caused the usual sensation.

Joseph, a handsome boy of sixteen, with a close-cropped bullet-head and black eyes, declined all refreshments, and subsided into a corner whence he could gaze undisturbed at Miss Masserene's sparkling round face.

She was teaching Monsieur Debreux, the young non-commissioned officer, how to knit, having discovered Madame Riviere's crimson stocking on a side-table.

The lesson was evidently one of a series of other days, for Dick heard the young lady complain of his being very forgetful and reproach him with giving a great deal of unnecessary trouble.

Young Debreux, on the other hand, his eye-glass stuck anxiously into his eye and his clumsy masculine fingers struggling with his five needles, asserted that he was making superhuman efforts to excel and to profit by mademoiselle's kind instructions.

Dick Strong looked on scornfully at the harmless little pleasantry; and he told himself that it was as well he should understand, once and for all, that his beautiful cousin could no more help being charming with men of all sorts and ages and conditions than she could help the dazzling blue of her eyes, or the whiteness of her complexion, or that curious expression of mingled sarcasm and melancholy which underlay her very brightest smiles and lent her her peculiar charm.

Not half an hour ago she had been sobbing at his side in the dusky garden alley, pouring out her heart to him, as she had poured it out once before in the balcony overlooking the moonlit Breton sea; and now she seemed to be quite prettily absorbed in her knitting-lesson, and was laughing with as much bright vexation over her pupil's inability to "purl two" as though there were no such things in the world as unhappy homes and wasted lives and hopeless futures.

But, if Monsieur Debreux could not as yet knit stockings, he could sing the most charming French romances, which he did at once, when asked, with cheerful alacrity. Gentle cousin Therese played his accompaniment at sight with much taste.

Adele's cousin Nanine sang a pretty song about a little gray bird, still to her sister's musician-like accompaniment.

Adele was ordered by mamma to play her new piece, as "a proof of goodwill," and several other pupils performed in their turn between the relays of tea and sponge-cakes. This seemed to be the rule.

Every one must do his or her best.

No refusals were accepted except from Miss Masserene, who was naturally fatigued after her journey.

The smallest tot of all played a five-finger exercise, and rushed from the stool to her mother's arms to hide her confusion in that tender heaven.

"Never mind, dear," said the mother—herself a brilliant pianiste, Madame Riviere whispered to Dick—"it is your very first performance in public, and I find that you have done very well. You gave all the shades, look you, of which the exercise was capable."

"It is to you to play now, Tiphaine," declared Adele, a young lady who was terribly spoiled by papa; and Tiffany, solemnly rising, demanded with mock humility that Mademoiselle Therese should play her accompaniment also.

"I have no music," she said, as Therese good-naturedly rose and went again to the piano.

"But you can follow, I know. It is the 'Carnival of Venice.'"

There was a suppressed groan, which ended in a laugh as Tiffany drew from the pocket of her old blue gown a big tin whistle.

Quite unmoved, she directed her accompanist as to the key and the time, and then, gravely adjusting her mouth and her fingers to the whistle, she began to play.

Her instrument had cost two cents, her air was hackneyed, and yet in a moment or two every one in the room was listening intently to the silvery and intricate variations which the girl poured forth one after the other.

Dick Strong thought he must be in a fantastic dream, with the odd-looking foreign saloon, the unaccustomed ways and faces, Ninon's pale and stately beauty in the full light of the chandelier, and, standing against the greenish-gray wall, Tiffany's clever little ugly frizzy red head and straight thin shape in its shabby gown, as she deftly fingered her tin whistle and coaxed from its shallow mouth such tones as seemed worthy of a better source.

Cousin Therese's accompaniment was also in its way a work of art.

Her serious olive countenance and Madonna braids made a pretty contrast to Tiff's beautiful red curls and funny little nose.

The performance was listened to breathlessly, and was rewarded with a storm of laughter, applause and ejaculations.

"Where did you learn?

"Who taught you?

"Is it difficult? Where does one buy such a whistle?"

"Oh, Tiff," said Ninon, taking her sister's face in both her hands as she came back to her and knelt down at her side, "I did not know that you had secrets from me! And yet I find out for the first time to-day that you can play the violin—and shall I say the flute?"

Tiffany laughed.

"It was when you were away I picked them up," she explained, rubbing her cheek softly against her sister's hand. "There was a little fiddler belonging to the theatre, who lived under us, and he gave me some lessons; and I picked up the whistle myself after he went away. I could not afford to buy a fiddle, and I wanted something to play on!"

Ninon gave her a sudden kiss and let her go.

Her eyes were full of tears as for a moment, they met Dick's.

CHAPTER IX.

DICK followed Tiffany into a corner with her cup of tea.

"I did not know I had such a clever cousin," he said, smiling kindly down at her.

"Do you play the piano as well as you play the violin?"

"I am learning"—Tiffany made room for her new cousin beside her, as he seemed inclined to sit down. "Ninon is teaching me.

"I had no piano until she came back from school."

"You must have missed her greatly while she was away," said Dick.

"Yes"—abruptly.

"I mean while she was at school," the young man explained.

"Oh"—the child brightened and drew a long breath—"you see I was too young to know her when she went away to Paris. It is only since she came back——"

"You would not like to lose her again?"

"Don't tell her that," urged Tiff, in a low voice.

"I can get on very well. She must go away sometimes.

"How can she spend all her life here? Cousin Dick, indeed she ought to go back to Lady Ingram. You tell her that she ought—that I don't care. She will mind what you say."

"What makes you think so?" asked Dick feeling a sudden rush of pleasure in the notion.

"Oh—her letters!

"She often wrote about you; and she wants some one to take care of her. She thinks of nothing but me."

"You are very fond of your sister, Tiffany?"

"Fond of her!"—the child's ugly face began to work and to flush.

"I can't talk about it at all. I don't suppose other sisters have ever been quite as we have been; that is why it is different. Look here!"—the merry talk was going on all about them—they were alone in a corner by the screen.

"Do you know what I was when Ninon came home, and what she has been to me ever since?

"You are our cousin; it is no harm to tell you.

"I remember the evening she came back quite well. I had done my work for the day—washed up the dishes, I mean, and carried the water up the stairs—and mother had let me go out to play with some children who live in our street. We were dancing a round, you know; it is a game, and I was singing at the top of my voice, when a carriage drove up, and a beautiful tall young lady got out and rang at our bell.

"My mother was out.

"I knew there was no one to answer the bell.

"'Tiphaine,' said Mimi Bouton, 'there is a visitor for your mother. Who can it be?'—and I went to see what the young lady wanted.

"I knew that Ninon was expected home, but I thought she would be something like myself. I had forgotten how she looked, and I supposed somehow that my sister must be little, poor and shabby as well as me: so, when I saw pretty tall Ninon standing at the door and heard her ask in her sweet Parisian French if Madame Masserene lived there, I curtseyed and said that my mother was out, but would she leave any message?

"'Your mother?' she said beginning to tremble, and turning paler as she looked at me.

"'Then you are Tiffany?'

"'Yes, Mademoiselle,' I said curtseying again; but she stooped down and caught me in her arms and began to smother me with her tears and her kisses.

"'Don't you know me?' she said, before all the children.

"'I am your sister; I am Ninon. You are my dear, dear little old Tiff!' Wasn't it kind of her?" Tiffany said, pausing and looking up at Dick in the midst of her narrative.

Dick touched the little thing's hand with his for a moment.

"Go on," he said gently.

"Oh, it has been the same ever since!" said Tiffany, nodding vigorously.

"She always takes my part with Francine and—and everybody. Sometimes," she added, hanging her head, "my mother is tired and loses her temper, and I don't mind.

"But Ninon will not have anything said. Did you ever see Ninon when she is very angry?" she asked simply, lifting her shrewd little eyes confidingly to the young man's face.

"Not yet," he answered smiling.

"How does she look when she is angry, Tiffany?"

"Oh, she looks very pale and quiet, and hardly says a word! But I think we are all afraid of her.

"I remember that I had my ironing to do the day after she came home, and she asked mother why she did not keep a nurse to do the work.

"And mother told her that she could not afford it while she was paying her school-bills.

"Ninon pinned up her dress and would do the ironing.

"She did not know how, and it was a very hot day.

"I remember how white she looked, and how her hands were scorched with the heat and trembling with the weight of the iron; but she would not stop until it was finished though mother came and cried about it, and I felt as if I should like to cry too. And next morning she helped me to wash the dishes and make the beds, and she would have carried the water up three flights of stairs, cousin Dick, with her little soft hands, only that mother did it herself and said she would see about getting a nurse."

"That is old Francine, I suppose?"

"Yes; and, now that Francine is with us, Ninon teaches me English history and German and the piano, and I walk with her instead of playing in the street, and I have just the same dresses and hats as she has. Nobody knows how good she is but me!"

"Don't you think I can guess?" asked Dick, a good deal moved.

"Oh, you can guess perhaps, but I know! And she is only your cousin. She is my sister, and I am hers. She has no other sister but me.

"I would die for her. Really, I mean—not just for the sake of saying it. When I think of her and of all she has been to me, cousin Dick, I feel as I do when I hear the 'Marseillaise' played.

"Don't you know how it chokes you? And you feel that you could walk straight up to the mouth of a cannon, if necessary, and be shot, if only they would play loud enough, and——"

"You little chatter-box!" said Ninon, coming across the room, carrying her small dark head stately above her washed-out gown—she was followed by her under-officer and by Joseph's jealous black eyes.

"Do you know that it is time to go home? Run and get your hat like a good old Tiff. Dick will be tired of this mild little entertainment.

"Are you very tired?" she added, as Tiffany obediently ran away.

Her black-lashed blue eyes looked up innocently into his.

"Do you forgive me"—making the prettiest little mouth at him—"for having bored you?"

The look and the voice were to Dick like food to a hungry man.

"I am not so sure," he answered jealously "about being able to forgive that interminable knitting-lesson. You never taught me to knit."

They both began to laugh.

"You are not a Frenchman," said Ninon lightly.

"How else is one to amuse oneself with young Debreux?"

"Why need you amuse yourself at all?"—jealously still.

"To keep me from thinking," she answered with a shrug of her shoulders.

"And, besides"—looking at him again—"you never came near me all the evening I thought I had bored you beyond endurance with my confidences."

"Ninon," the young man protested, in an eager whisper, "you did not—you could not!"

But Ninon had already turned to Monsieur Debreux, and was mischievously telling him that Mr. Strong did not approve of men knitting stockings.

"British prejudice!" she declared, shrugging her pretty shoulders.

"My cousin does not know that you can also write charming verses, that the other day—'the other day' means last winter—you translated one of Calverley's poems into excellent French in ten minutes by my watch, that you can play the violin and the piano and dance to perfection—none of which accomplishments he himself possesses.

"But all that does not matter.

"He looks upon us as two frivolous beings, in consequence of that luckless stocking episode.

"We must be very sensible on the way home, in order to regain, if possible, some portion of Mr. Strong's esteem."

Most of this, being in French, was lost upon Dick, as was the young soldier's poor defence of himself and Miss Masserene. He had nothing to say, and looked uncomfortable.

Fortunately Tiffany came back at that moment tying on her shabby little bonnet, and singing, "If I had wings."

"Ah, if you had!" cried Ninon. "Dick, if you had wings, what would you do? You don't know, of course"—as Dick stared and hesitated.

"But"—smiling—"I warrant that Monsieur"—she turned to the young soldier—"if you had wings, what would you do? Quick—for the honor of France!"

"But, mademoiselle," said young fellow, with a gay little bow, "I should cut them off, naturally, in order to always remain by you."

"There!" cried Ninon, nodding her thanks as gaily. "When would an Englishman have thought of anything half so pretty?"

"Never, I should hope," growled Dick in her ear. "Confounded French nonsense!"

"Oh, Dick!"—holding up a very pretty finger.

"Is that fellow going to walk home with us?" continued her cousin, not heeding the reproof.

"Why not? He and his sister are going our way.

"But don't be afraid.

"We will be sensible. We will talk philosophy if you like. Oh, Mr. Debreux can do that as well as he can do everything else, I assure you!"

And then good nights were said to their hostess; and the five young people—little Pauline Debreux clinging to Tiffany—set off on their homeward walk through the moonlit streets.

Ninon had a young man on each side of her.

The two children walked on before; but the conversation languished, notwithstanding her own and the young French soldier's gaiety, in presence of Dick's jealous scowls.

The girl stopped suddenly when they reached the silent gardens of the Bishopric and broke into a bright laugh.

"Dick," she said, "you are enough to drive any one to desperation.

"You don't like philosophy any better than nonsense, it appears.

"What is one to do with you? I feel an insane desire to do something outrageous, provoked to it entirely by your outrageous solemnity.

"Valhubert"—she saluted the tall white statue in military fashion—"forgive this passing folly in your glorious presence; but we feel ourselves—we feather-brained compatriots of yours, for am not I too French at heart?—we feel ourselves irresistibly compelled to astonish the too well-regulated mind of this stolid Briton! Tiff, Pauline, come then! Let us dance a nice round!"

The girls turned round laughing; and before Dick Strong knew where he was, his hands were gaily seized and he found that he was making one of a ring that was dancing round and round the statue in the moonlight, and singing aloud—it was Tiffany who started the tune.

They stopped only when they were out of breath, and then even Dick joined in the peal of laughter which greeted the absurdity of the situation.

"You child!" he said gently to Ninon, when they had at last parted company with the two Debreux and were climbing the stairs of the house in the Rue des Quatre Œufs, followed by little Tiffany.

"I wish I were," Ninon said, with one of her sudden changes from gay to grave. "It is so good to be merry, and not to think!"

By Lady Ingram's desire, the lamp had not yet been lit in the little crimson rep saloon, and she and Mrs. Masserene were sitting in the summer moonlight at the open window when the young people appeared.

Mrs. Masserene had been crying, Ninon saw.

The three bright faces at the door fell.

Poor little Tiff, who had long since discovered in what estimation she was held by Lady Ingram, stole away to the kitchen, where Francine was nodding over knitting by the light of a small oil-lamp, with only her cat to keep her company.

"Stop!" the old woman said, as the child crept in.

"Have you hunger after your dance? Look, I have saved you something! Sit down there on the stool and eat.

"Is it good?"

"Oh, you good old Francine!" cried Tiffany, who was growing fast and was always hungry.

"I will keep half for Ninon." And she sat down contentedly enough, with the cat in her lap, and began to eat her cake.

It was very still in the little kitchen, above the burnished pots and pans of which hung Francine's wooden crucifix, and in whose narrow window were many pots of flowers.

They could hear the murmuring voices in the saloon, and now and then some louder remonstrance in Mrs. Masserene's angry accents.

"I have done my best to persuade Ninon," Lady Ingram was saying calmly—she was disappointed, it was true, and, had spent a good deal of money to little purpose but on principle she would not permit herself to be ruffled; "and, ungrateful as she has proved, I will make one more effort to rescue her from the hopeless position into which she is rapidly sinking here. You must take her to England, Mrs. Masserene. I don't see that there is anything else to be done."

"How can I afford to live in England?" exclaimed Mrs. Masserene, in a voice choked by much crying.

"Nobody knows but myself what a struggle it has been to give Ninon the education she has had.

"And the money might as well have been flung into the gutter if she is going to refuse your offer, my lady.

"It is downright wicked of her, that's what it is!"

Ninon did not say a word.

Dick, watching her with pitying eyes, saw that hardly a muscle moved of her lovely pale face.

"I quite agree with you," answered Lady Ingram drily; "and, as far as I am concerned, I might be little inclined to force any further benefits on a girl who is so undeserving of interest.

"But one always owes something to one's family.

"I cannot forget, of course, that her mother was a Beaufoy.

"I have written very warmly about her to the head of our family, and with this result at least, Mrs Masserene. It appears that there is a cottage vacant on Mr. Beaufoy's estate in Daleshire, which he is willing to allow you to occupy for a stated period rent free.

"It is close to his own place, the Priory, where, I believe, he has some intention of passing the summer next year if his health will permit."

"Oh, my lady," cried Mrs. Masserene rapturously, "this is too kind. It is more than Ninon deserves really."

"Yes, I think it is. But at least it will bring her, in some ways, nearer to her family; and perhaps I may arrange for a season in London in the spring, if she will consent for that short time to tear herself from the fair Tiffany's arms."

"Oh, Tiffany!" cried Tiff's mother contemptuously.

"I shall stand no more nonsense of that kind, your ladyship may be sure."

"Is it so unusual for sisters to love each other in the great world," demanded Ninon as calmly as Lady Ingram herself had spoken, "that every one seems to think it worth while to be sarcastic at Tiff's and my expense?"

Lady Ingram continued as if she had not heard the interruption—

"Apart from those advantages, I don't know that there are many others worth mentioning.

"Should the Priory remain shut up, you will not be much better off in Marybridge, so far as society goes, than you are in Avranches.

"Mr. Beaufoy's nephews live abroad, as he does.

"Madame du Mottay, his niece, has never even seen the place.

"Still I think that, on the whole, anything must be better than a hopeless little foreign town like this; and, if you choose to accept Mr. Beaufoy's offer, I will write to Spa, where he is now staying, at once. The cottage may need repairs.

"I think that no time should be lost. And now I have said my say, and I really must go.

"Are you quite ready, Dick?"

"In one moment," said Dick hurriedly: and he paused to whisper in Ninon's ear—"You will come to England; you will be nearer to my mother, dear.

"You must come to us. I shall go away happier now that I know she is going to see you."

Ninon smiled at him, though she was still pale and upset.

"I leave to-morrow," said Lady Ingram slowly.

"I confess that I go back somewhat disappointed; but, after all, one gets used to ingratitude nowadays.

"It was my own fault for imagining that Ninon was a little different from the rest of the world.

"But we are all selfish; why should she not be selfish too? I don't blame you, child. But I confess to being somewhat disgusted with my own folly."

"I am sorry," Ninon said gently, "and I am not ungrateful, though it is natural perhaps that you should not believe it. I won't kiss you if you don't wish it—you need not be afraid.

"Good-bye, Katherine, and do forgive me if you can."

While Mrs. Masserene was lighting her departing guests down the dingy old staircase, Ninon went softly into the kitchen and called to Tiffany.

"We will lock ourselves into our room," she said in a whisper.

"I can't bear much more to-night. Come. Good night, Francine."

The two girls, sitting on their beds, listening, not without alarm, to Mrs. Masserene's angry summons when she came back.

Then Francine was heard interfering.

The young ladies were fed.

Would it not do to speak to them in the morning?

Madame herself had need of repose.

The girls kissed each other with a great sense of relief when, at last the angry voice subsided into a half-appeased grumble: and the sudden banging of a door gave evidence that they were safe, for that night at least, from further reproaches.

And then, when their prayers were said, and they lay each in her narrow bed in the moonlight, Ninon told Tiffany the wonderful news of their approaching departure for England.

To live in England had always been the dream of both their lives; and to live near the Priory, in a charming cottage, no doubt, with a garden and English roses and sweet air and sounds!

"You will be happy then, Ninon?" said Tiffany anxiously, raising herself on her elbow to look at her beautiful sister, as she lay with her arms clasped behind her head.

"You will not regret Dinard and Sir Robert Davenant and all your pretty dresses?"

"We shall be together, you and I, Tiff," answered Ninon, smiling in the beautiful moonlight.

"Yes, that is happiness enough for me. But you?

"Oh, but everything will come right, you will see!

"Mr. Beaufoy will die soon, and Brian will inherit the fortune, and come home to the Priory, and fall in love with you and you will be married and live happy ever after."

* * * * * *

"He is coming home to-night, you know old Bevis."

Bevis blinked his eyes and slobbered affectionately.

"And we shall be very glad indeed to see him sha'n't we?"

Bevis said "yes," in the plainest possible dog-talk.

"Gladder than we intend quite to let him know—you understand?"

A wink of great discretion from Bevis.

"Because, you see, girls and dogs both suffer the same disadvantage, Bevis dear. They feel a great deal more than they are permitted to express.

"I am awfully sorry for you, Bevis; so you must be a little bit sorry for your own

poor little Mistress Mary—promise me!" Dick Strong's cousin Mary clasped her two round arms about the dog's neck, and laid her cheek upon his shaggy head.

Old Bevis whined, and put his paw upon her lap, and tried unsuccessfully to lick the girl's hand.

He could not possibly have done any more; and Mary felt assured of his entire sympathy.

"Dick is very good, isn't he," she whispered again, a pretty flush stealing into her dimpled cheeks—"and so gentle to you and to me and to everything that is weaker than himself? And handsome too—don't you think so, Bevis? Don't you like gray eyes and close-cropped curley fair hair, and big sunburnt hands that hold yours in a protecting kind of way, and always give them a kind little squeeze before they let them go? Oh, but I forgot, you poor dear old thing; you've got only paws! But then he pulls your ears often, and he never pulls mine; so I think we are quite even on that point, after all. You needn't be jealous. If you come to that, I think I am a little—just a very little bit jealous of you, sir! Look at your collar! It has his name on it. It tells everybody that you are Richard Strong's dog, Bevis."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Found and Lost.

BY P. C. BERRETTA.

IN a corner of Madame Froissart's brilliantly-lighted drawing-room, watching the gay scene being therein enacted, sat Gertrude Meyer.

For the moment she was alone—with her, indeed, a rare occurrence, since she was belle and beauty; but a slight sprain to her ankle a few days previous, had prevented her joining in the dance, and the little throng of men who all the evening had gathered around her had for the instant disappeared, many of them at her express command.

The last had lingered, reluctant still to go, when—"I am tired," she said. "I want to be alone."

He bent then, from his splendid height and, with a glance from his dark eyes few women could have resisted, whispered a few words in her ear; but neither glance nor whisper brought even a momentary flush to the lovely cheek.

"Elsa is without a partner," she rejoined. "I like to see you dance together. Ask her for this waltz."

An angry light kindled in Frederic Houghton's eyes, and he turned abruptly away.

The next moment, Elsa, with a pleased flush, was leaning on his arm, and with a half-sigh, though she knew not wherefore, Miss Meyer sank back in her cushioned corner.

Was she always to receive love, never to return it?

Gertrude asked herself.

True, Frederic Houghton had never, in words, declared his passion; but every glance, every accent, had been replete with its intensity.

She felt sure that he loved her.

How poor and meagre was the cold friendship she might offer in return!

But if she determined to smile at least more kindly, he gave her no opportunity.

Other men flocked back to her side.

She had sent him to Elsa; by Elsa he remained.

One dance followed another, but he would resign her to no other partner; and only an amused gleam crept into Gertrude's eyes as she watched him, and fancied she read the pique which prompted his action—a pique which in part reflected upon herself, as the next day and the next passed, until the week had gone, and still she neither saw nor heard from him.

At the end of that period she again shrugged her shoulders, and told herself that she had forgotten him.

It was from Elsa, a fortnight later, that she learned his regiment had been ordered upon active service, and was to depart in three days for the seat of war.

What should she say to him when he came to bid her farewell?

She need not have questioned.

She waited, but he came not.

He left with his good-bye to her unspoken.

It caused her no real grief, no heart-pang but a sort of restless surprise, which stirred some depths whose existence hitherto had been unknown.

Three or four days later Elsa came to her with a shy blush.

She had always been the child's friend and confidante.

Though in reality but twelve months her senior, she felt herself the elder by long years.

"I have a favor to ask of you, Gertrude," she began.

"Frederic asked me to write him. This morning I received his first letter. I am ashamed to send him my poor little scribbling, and at school I remembered how beautiful always were your exercises, and I said to myself, 'I will go to Gertrude—she will tell me what to say.'

"I love him so much—so very much Gertrude!

"I think that he, too, loves me. I want to breathe into my words just enough of my heart's perfume that he may know where to seek to find the flower itself."

Gertrude looked up amazed.

"Is it this love which makes you so poetical, Elsa?" she asked. "I never heard you talk like this before."

"It is one of your own thoughts I borrowed," Elsa answered. "But tell me, will you do for me what I ask?"

"You think it will be honorable?"

"Yes, yes! Why not? You can tell him nothing I do not feel—only you will paint the picture so that he may love to look at it."

A little longer Gertrude demurred, and then, drawing to her pen, ink and paper, she wrote.

As she did so, her reluctance vanished.

She fancied herself in Elsa's place.

She imagined how some rosebud, wooed by the sun, would one by one open its shrinking petals, quivering 'twixt ecstasy and pain, to meet the passionate kiss of the day god; and so her imagination found vent in words.

She covered the sheets with closely-filled lines, and as she read them Elsa pressed them to her lips.

"Ah, they will make him love me!" she cried, as she ran with them to her own home to copy them in her own handwriting.

By the next post came his answer.

Elsa had been right.

The letter had strangely stirred his heart.

Pulses he had thought dormant, he wrote had leaped into mad, exultant life.

He had slept, he told her, with the paper next his heart.

Again Gertrude wrote, and yet again, until she looked for his replies almost as Elsa.

She who had never loved in her life, found a strange and satisfying delight in pouring upon the sheet the cry of a hungry soul, while her own soul knew no hunger, the passion she had never felt, the ecstasy of a love at which she scoffed.

"So might I feel," she whispered to herself, "when, like the sleeping princess in fairy lore, the magic prince would bend and kiss my lips."

And so to this unknown king she wrote.

The replies became more frequent, more ardent, until at last there came a letter when Frederic Houghton asked Elsa to become his wife.

With tears of joy in her bright blue eyes she brought this, like the others, to Gertrude.

"Answer him," she said, "and tell him yes! yes! yes!"

Slowly Miss Meyer read the letter through.

From whence came this dull pain at her heart?

A mist swam before her eyes.

The written characters were blurred from her sight.

By a powerful effort she controlled herself, and spoke with some degree of calmness.

"Not this, Elsa," she said.

"This you must answer yourself."

"Oh, no, no! I cannot!

"Make it yet more beautiful than the others, Gertrude.

"The regiment is ordered home again, he writes; so there will be no more letters—at least, until after we are married, and then there will be no more need of poetry. He will not miss its absence."

"No need of poetry?"

"Ah," thought Gertrude, "then was love's perfect fulness but prose?"

"Let me be alone," she said aloud.

"This evening I will send you your letter."

Giving orders not to be disturbed, she seated herself at her desk, but one by one two scalding tears fell from the beautiful, proud eyes upon the blank page spread before her.

They were the unconscious baptism of her awakened womanhood.

Then she wrote, but it was her heart's blood, rather than the ink, which spread itself upon the sheet whereon she impressed her soul.

"I give you all," she wrote, "my past, my present, my future.

"To me I see but two words—husband and wife!

"They are emblazoned in letters of gold within the shrine where my soul kneels and worships.

"Frederic, I love you!"

Her pen dropped from her hand.

Had she indeed written the words, or was it her heart which had cried them aloud in the stillness?

A hundred mocking demons took up the cry and echoed it.

She heard it everywhere around about her.

She saw it blazoned in the air.

She sank trembling on her knees, and buried her face in her shaking hands.

She and her secret were face to face at last.

She had sold her birthright for a mess of pottage.

In the evening, true to her promise, Elsa received the letter, but unfinished.

"Add to it what you will," wrote Gertrude, "I could not close it fittingly."

But Elsa sent the copy with no added words.

Another fortnight and the regiment had arrived.

A month passed, but Gertrude and Frederic Houghton had not met.

Once he had called with Elsa, but she had not been at home.

By a singular coincidence it was at another of Madame Froissart's receptions that fate threw them again together.

For a moment her hand had rested in his and his keen eyes searched her face.

Then Elsa came to claim him for a dance, and they separated.

Midnight had sounded, when some one asked Gertrude for a song.

Many joined in the plea.

Giving a somewhat reluctant consent, she took her seat at the piano in the little music room, the curtains dividing that from the drawing-room drawn aside.

She hesitated a moment, then struck the chords, and soon the rich, sweet voice filled the space.

"It was a dream," was the song she had chosen, and the pathos of voice and words brought quick tears to many eyes.

As the last echo died away, amid a murmur of applause and admiration, a man bent close beside her.

"Come into the conservatory a moment," he said.

"I wish to speak to you."

She let him place her hand within his own and lead her where he would.

Among the plants and flowers he turned to her.

"I must speak," he said.

"You shall know how I have loved you!

"In another month to tell you would be sin."

"Is not your betrothal, then, as sacred as your marriage?" she questioned.

"No," he answered; "for sometimes, Gertrude, I feel it would be greater sin to redeem than break my pledge.

"Listen to me.

"You knew the old love I bore you, though I never spoke in words.

"Oh, heart of ice! had you not one throb for the anguish I endured?

"Coldly you sent me from you to another.

"She welcomed me with a smile—you had dismissed me with a frown.

"She warmed me in the sunlight—you chilled me in the shadow.

"For a little time I sought diversion and forgetfulness.

"In the latter I failed sadly.

"With gladness I hailed the outbreak which brought my regiment into service again.

"Elsa's regret at my leaving her softened and touched me.

"I begged her to write to me.

"Through her I thought I should hear news of you; but, instead, her letters gave me a wondering glimpse into a nature whose depths I had never suspected.

"How rich, how full, how true they were I cannot paint to you.

"I read, and re-read them.

"My heart cried out for more and more, until I knew that its longing and its need were satisfied at last.

"How rich and exhaustless must be the mine which stored such jewels!

"With man's avaricious greed, I longed for its possession.

"Is it only the fulfilment of the wish which makes me fancy its treasure already is exhausted?

"It was Elsa's letters, not Elsa, that I loved.

"She gives me food, but my heart still is hungry.

"Gertrude, help me!

"Tell me the right!"

They were alone.

The sweet scent of the flowers filled the air.

A murmur from a little mimic stream rushed past them.

Through the dim light she saw the white impassioned pleading of his face.

She heard his quick, agitated breathing.

Her own heart beat so loudly that unconsciously she pressed her hand upon it.

Her secret seemed to enwrap her in a tangled cloud.

She loved, and here before her stood her king—The magic prince had come at last.

For this only she had given up the birthright of her soul.

One word, one little word, and she might reclaim it.

One word, one little word, and her heart and his would know hunger nevermore.

The temptation stifled her.

She gasped for breath.

"Then the mist cleared—she saw clearly.

"Let us return to Elsa, Mr. Houghton," she said calmly.

"She will wonder at our absence; and as for what we have been speaking of, remember the words of my song. 'It is a dream.' You have your letters—they are realities. One cannot always live in dreamland."

"For the second time," he answered, "you send me from you."

"For the second time, and the last."

"Oh, Heaven! that a soul so beautiful in outward form should wear a case of ice!"

Thus, man-like, and in a man's blindness he judged her.

He went forth, in his weakness, to redeem his pledge.

She, in her strength, took up her double burden, but, that she bore it, gave the world no sign.

A STRIAN THEATRES.—As a result of costly experience, the Austrian Government has decided that henceforth theatrical buildings must be detached. Between the auditorium and the stage there must be a wall at least 20 feet high and 18 inches thick placed above the roof for ready use in isolating the stage from the rest of the house in case of fire. The stage must be of sufficient height for the curtain to be raised without being rolled. No one is to be allowed to live in the theatre, and the stage carpenter's shops, the stage appliances and the refreshment bars are to be outside the building. The dresses of the actors must be dipped in a preparation to render them fireproof, and no explosive matter is to be left in the the theatre. Abundant means are to be provided for the exit of an audience.

Bric-a-Brac.

CHINESE WORK.—Engraved wood blocks for printing books, the mariner's compass and rockets, the use of movable types, and the prototype of the printing-press were all known in China in the tenth century. Pi Sheng is the name of the man who invented a mode of making impressions with separate characters before anything of the kind was done in Europe until five centuries later.

THE HANGMAN'S WAGE.—The executioner's tariff in the fourteenth century was lately discovered in the archives at Darmstadt. For boiling a criminal in oil the executioner received 24 florins; if the wretch was burned alive the fee was 14 florins, and 10 for hanging. To break a man on the wheel cost 6 florins; the fee for the rack was 5, and the same sum was charged for branding on the shoulder or forehead or for cutting off the nose and ears.

PRONUNCIATION OF TEA.—That tea was sometimes even spelled tay, between 1600 and 1650, might be proved from the records of the old East India Company. I have, says a writer in a distinct recollection of a visit I paid to John Stuart Mill, many years ago, at his office at the India house in Leadenhall-street, when he pointed out to me a framed autograph letter from the authorities there to their agent (at Bantam, I think), desiring him to send home 25 pounds of the "best tay he could get." The date of this letter was within the above-mentioned years.

A FRENCH DANDY, 1625.—He "had a suit of Turkie grogram doubled with Taffeta, cut with long slashes, or carbonadoes, after the French fashion, and belaied with bugle lace * * * His cloke was also of Turkie grogram, cut upon black Taffeta * * * Through the openings of his doublet appeared his shirt of the purest Holland, and wrought with curious needle-work; the points at his waste and knees all edged with a silver edging; his garters, roses, and hatband, suitable to his points," i. e., matching them; and he wore "a beaver-hat, and a pair of silk stockings."

GOING BACK.—The hog in a single generation changes in form and color and habit from the staid and quiet porker to the fleet and fierce wild boar. One imported boar is told of that changed immediately after escaping from a ranch, and became as wild and fleet as a deer, with a thin body and arched back, and legs that appeared much longer, while he more slowly assumed the dark sandy color of the wild boar. The tendency to reversion, too, is more immediate when the animal or breed has been more recently reclaimed from the wild state and where the change by domestication has been most marked and rapid.

SIMILES.—What strange similes people do make use of, to be sure! They say that a thing is as black as the ace of spades, when their comparison would be much stronger did they say as black as the ten of spades, which is ten times blacker than the ace. A man tells you that he has been working all day like a dog, when you know and he knows that a dog doesn't work at all. He tells you that the sky last evening was black as ink, leaving your mind in a state of uncertainty whether the sky was blue or red, either of which it might have been according to his simile. Then he tells you that Scandie is as mad as a hatter, as though hatters were more prone to anger than the average human.

THE SNAKE'S CUNNING.—The following story of a snake that found "how to do it" is by a man who used to live at Ceylon, in a house in Slave Island, raised on a high platform: "The steps up to the door had become loosened, and behind them a colony of frogs had established themselves. One morning I watched a snake (a cobra) creep up, insert its head into a crack, and seize a frog, which it then and there swallowed. But the crack that admitted the thin, flat head and neck of the ophidian would not permit of the same being withdrawn when the neck was swollen with the addition of the frog inside it. The snake tugged and struggled, but in vain, and after a series of futile attempt, disgorged its prey and withdrew its head. But the sight was too tantalizing. Again the head was inserted in the crack, and the coveted morsel swallowed, and again the vain struggles to withdraw were renewed. I saw this repeated several times, till, gaining wisdom by experience, the snake seized the frog by one leg, withdrew it from its colgn of vantage, and swallowed it outside."

"YE BANKS AN' BRAES.—The Emperor Napoleon once emphatically denied that the English were a musical people, or that they possessed a single good national tune. Correcting himself in this respect, he admitted that they had one, and only one good melody, which was, "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon." Here the Emperor fell into a singular error—a double error—though at the time he spoke the tune was universally admitted to be Scotch, and one of the very best of the many beautiful melodies which either the Highlands or Lowlands have produced. In a letter to his friend, George Thomson, Robert Burns, under date of 1794, says: "There is an air, 'The Caledonian Hunt's Delight,' to which I wrote a song that you will find in Johnson—'Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon.' This air, I think, might find a place amongst your hundred, as Lear says of his knights." It turns out, however, that the tune is neither English, as Napoleon thought, nor Scottish, as Burns asserted, nor Irish, as many have suspected—but French, and that it is to be found in a French collection published in Paris long before Burns was born.

NESTLINGS.

BY F. C. A.

O little bird! sing sweet among the leaves,
Safe hid from sight, beside thy downy nest;
The rain falls, murmuring to the drooping eaves
A low refrain, that suits thy music best.
Sing sweet, O bird! thy recompense draws nigh—
Four callow nestlings 'neath the mother's wing
So many flashing wings that by and by
Will cleave the sunny air. O sing, bird, sing!

O little bird! sing sweet. Though rain may fall,
And though thy callow brood thy care require,
Behind the rain-cloud, with its trailing pall,
Shineth undimmed the gracious golden fire.
Sing on, O bird! nor of the cloud take heed;
For thou art heritor of glorious Spring;
And every field is sacred to thy need—
The wealth, the beauty, thine. O sing, bird, sing!

O bird! sing sweet. What though the time be near
When thou shalt sit upon that swaying bough,
With no sweet mate, no nestling, by, to hear
The bubbling song thou sing'st to glad them now!
Thy task was done, fulfilled in sweet spring days.
In golden summer, when thy brood take wing,
Shalt thou not still have left a hymn of praise,
Because thy work is over. Sing, bird, sing!

RED RIDING-HOOD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL; OR, THE MYSTERY OF ST. EOLON,"

ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLII.—[CONTINUED.]

I ALWAYS knew you were a viper," Gregory said, standing over him in breathless scorn.

"Now pick yourself up, if you will.

"One blow is enough for such a creature as you.

"I've damaged your beauty a little."

Delgado's passion was past speech.

His face was colorless, his hand were clenched.

He knew that he was powerless in the clutch of brute strength; his weapons and his power were of another kind.

Crafty, subtle, cruel, he could crawl and strike a secret blow, but not match himself with an animal open force like this.

So, as was natural to him, he dissembled, and, sick as he was with rage and pain and shame, he yet managed to speak blandly.

"Upon my word, Mr. Blake, I have no quarrel with you.

"For what particular act of courtesy of mine have you knocked me down?

"Perhaps I am indebted to your fair sister-in-law for this English politeness."

"No, you are indebted to me only.

"Lady Brentwyche had not the least idea that I was going to pay you a visit.

"As far as I know, she is still your great friend.

"I knocked you down on my cousin's account, because you are getting the blind side of a weak old man.

"And let Grace make one complaint to me, and I give you a second dose, and a stronger one.

"But for her entreaties, I should have done this long ago.

"You hold some terror over her which kept back my hand."

Delgado smiled; the sense of the secret power he possessed consoled him.

"Daughters in this country obey their parents, and the Duke di Valdivia is my friend," he said, in his quietest, most silvery tone.

"Good day, Mr. Blake.

"You have struck me, and in my first impulse I might have returned the blow.

"I am glad you stayed my hand."

Gregory did not understand his foe; he stared at him an instant in a bewildered way, then he felt satisfied as he saw his damaged countenance.

He turned on his heel to go, then came back, as if some after-thought had struck him.

"Speaking of my sister-in-law reminds me that my wife gave you a letter for her.

"I don't choose you should keep any letter of my wife's.

"It is only some trumpery commission or other; but just get up and give it to me, will you?"

"I had forgotten it," said Delgado, in a level tone.

"I found it but a few moments ago, after long search.

"Here it is.

"I have no wish whatever to keep any letters of Mrs. Blake's."

He opened a small desk, and took thence a letter, which he handed over to Gregory, without raising his swelled eyes.

The writing on the address was Harriet's, the seal was untouched.

Gregory saw this with a glance, and felt satisfied with his day's work as he walked homewards.

After examing the seal and the envelope and writing with eyes that seemed to burn with fear, Lady Brentwyche tore open the letter.

Within lay the ciphered paper and intact—her own figures, her own note-paper, no counterfeit.

Had Delgado spoken truth?

And believing her statement, had he considered the letter of no importance, and neither searched for it nor opened it?

In a word, was she once more safe?

The hope was overpowering; and, stretching out her hands towards Gregory, Lady Brentwyche burst into hysterical weeping.

CHAPTER XLIII.

IN a vast saloon, with carved and painted ceiling and inlaid floor, the Duke di Valdivia had received two visitors—the Marquis of Tosslande and his son, Lord Soulis.

The latter was spokesman, for the Marquis had chosen the easier *role* of mere assistant at the conversation.

"Is this your final answer, Duke?" said Lord Soulis.

"My friend Enderby will scarcely take it as such."

"It is final.

"I have other views for my daughter," returned the Duke, his eyes lighting up his pale face angrily.

"I have heard she has a suitor who is most disagreeable to her and far beneath her.

"Surely, Duke, you would not sacrifice your daughter to such a man?"

"She has been sacrificed by others," he answered, his eyes gleaming still more fiercely.

"Your friend Lord Enderby took advantage of her forlornness to keep her in his house as a servant.

"And, as if this were not enough, it was to ransom his child she made herself a public singer—an actress—a creature whom any one could look at and hiss and applaud as they pleased.

"You speak of Signor Delgado being beneath her, but no man of her own rank now will marry her.

"I have given her the alternative to accept this man—who loves her—or take the veil."

"Duke, you are too cruel," exclaimed the Marquis.

"Enderby is a good-hearted fellow, and he has loved your daughter faithfully for years——"

"Pardon me, I know Lord Enderby and his character quite well."

"Then, knowing him," interposed Lord Soulis eagerly, "you must feel that to give your daughter to such a man would ensure her happiness."

"I feel, my lord, that I would rather see my daughter lying dead there before me than see her the wife of Lord Enderby."

The half-wild, half-mad eyes that gleamed out of the Duke's haggard prison-pale face spoke more fiercely, more passionately than his cruel words.

"This is terrible!" said the Marquis, rising.

"I feel it is useless to prolong this painful discussion further."

"One word more," exclaimed Lord Soulis.

"I beg of you—I entreat you to let my friend plead for himself.

"I am a poor hand at speaking, I have not done him justice.

"Surely you will not refuse again to see him?"

"An interview between me and Lord Enderby would be both useless and painful.

"I must decline to hear another word on this matter.

"If there were no other and insuperable objection, the fact of his being a Protestant would be sufficient."

With these words the Duke dismissed his visitors.

Both were pale and unwontedly grave; both felt that they had been helplessly beaten by some unseen foe who had stood invisible at the Duke's side.

"The man is a frightful anachronism," said Lord Soulis, recovering himself in the open air.

"He has no right to live in this century."

"He is half mad!" returned the Marquis.

"I shall advise Enderby to run off with the girl."

"It is the only way.

"It can be done easily with a yacht!" said Lord Soulis.

"Let us give our help and counsel at once."

But, when this scheme was propounded to Lord Enderby, he did but smile sadly; he knew Grace, and knew that her high nature, her generous self-sacrificing spirit, would shrink from such a plan.

Not to gain happiness for herself would she forsake her father in a way that would wound him to the quick.

Others might feel angry and think of him bitterly; but in her soul there would be no resentment; large, sweet, tender compassion would cover all her faults.

There was much talk among the friends, and Lord Soulis insisted on searching the bays far and near for some yacht that could be purchased or hired; he would not give up the scheme, though Lord Enderby assured him it was hopeless.

A few days passed on feverishly; Lady Brentwyche was ill and distressed.

Lady Anne alone received her brother, her father, and Lord Enderby, and their consultations were frequent, sad and useless.

Then Gregory arrived, and the episode of his attack on Delgado made a diversion for a time and gratified Lord Soulis immensely.

But Lord Enderby divined the hatred and burning desire for revenge that would inflame a vain and cruel mind, and he felt this event would but hasten some dire catastrophe.

All hearts were strained in expectancy, rumors were in the air, fears were everywhere; they looked for they knew not what.

Lady Anne caught but rare glimpses of Grace; she waved her hands sometimes from the carriage in which she was driving with her father, or she spoke a hurried word as, leaning on his arm, they met at some open air concert, but she went no more to balls or parties.

One comfort arose from that blow of Gregory's; the recipient of it was laid up, and kept himself invisible; so his odiously handsome face was seen no more in public places by the Duke's side.

All knew this spared Grace much pain.

Had they not seen her shrink from the glance of those soft sleepy eyes that gathered fire from her pale pure face?

And, seeing this, was it not hard to hold back her lover's indignant hand and save that limping well-made figure from his angry grasp?

So it was a consolation to know that his eyes were green and black, and his beautiful countenance was damaged, and he was feigning illness till time repaired it, and denying himself to all comers.

This brought a reprieve, a breathing time of peace to others; but the man himself, like a wounded snake, was gathering venom and energy for a last spring.

To a creature of his nature, a personal disfigurement was a source of withering misery; his vanity, being wounded, caused him agonies.

He writhed as he lay on a sofa bathing his swelled and reddened face.

Meanwhile Lord Soulis went on an excursion, and returned in triumph by sea, in a fine yacht which lay at anchor in the bay, and swung round gracefully, and, as he said truly, was "a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

His young face began to gather gladness; there was a light in his eyes that looked dangerous, yet happy.

In fact, he was getting into fighting trim; his Scotch blood was up and ready for battle; he longed to bring his yacht into action.

"Now, Anne," he said eagerly, "without saying a word to Enderby, you must manage to see Grace and tell her my scheme, and get her to agree to it.

"Then I'll land a few blue-jackets on the first dark night that this horrid clear climate will vouchsafe to us, and we'll have her on board before that old anachronism can open his exceedingly disagreeable eyes."

But the next day the enthusiastic young fellow's scheme fell to pieces, shattered and scattered to the winds by a visit from Molly.

"I've runned out unbeknown," she said, entering Anne's room breathlessly.

"Because I can't speak their lingo, they won't let me go nowheres by myself—just as if I was a fool that couldn't ax my way home in plain English.

"Well, and we are going away; that's what I'm come for."

"Going away!" cried Anne.

"Yes, sure, to the world's end, or the mountains, or somewhere, where there bain't no English folks to pry round arter us.

"That's it."

"Oh, Molly, try to speak plainly!

"Try to tell me the name of the place to which you are going."

"I'm speaking plain as a pikestaff," said Molly.

"I always does when I've got English in my mouth, but you can't expect a young chiold like me to speak fitty the grate long words the folks here rolls about through their eyes and noses, or else throws round with their hands.

"At the Tower of Babel, I reckon, they catched the langwidge that the monkeys thrawed away, and that's why it's gibberish."

"The name, Molly—try to think of the name of the place."

"It eddn't macaroni," resumed Molly thoughtfully, "though there's 'oni' or 'bony' on it somewheres, and it's in a island—that's a plaace like a cork in a bowl of waater, you know—and there's a porth where the ships come, sealed—sealed Palermo."

"Palermo!

"Yes, yes, I know it!" cried Anne.

"You knows more'n I do," cried Molly.

"And I don't want to know the plaace.

"I'm whisht as a singed dog—I wants to creep into a hole and howl and die.

"That's how I feel when I'm bad here."

And poor Molly put her hand upon her throat, where a sob seemed to rise and fall.

"No one is hurting you, Molly, I hope?" said Anne.

"There's lots hurting me," answered Molly.

"I can't abide to see Miss Grace whisht as a streak o' moonlight.

"And there's they gashly ould things in black with head-clothes on, like corpses walking round by mistake, misthinking they're alive; they're up with her all day long praying and smiling dreadful, and putting their bony hands upon her head, with fingers itching to cut off her lovely long hair."

Anne listened, with brow leaning on her hands, her heart trembling, a shiver creeping over her frame.

She thought it best not to interrupt Molly by a word.

"And folks say Miss Grace is going to join they corpses, only not the ones that walk about; but t'others that live inside a grating like wild beasts, and ain't allowed out, not so much as wance a year at feer-time, when a wild 'nagerie *even* goes out with bugles and a drum."

"Molly, when are they going to the island?

"Can you remember—can you tell me that?"

"Can I tell 'ee?

"Yes, to be sure.

"We start to-night in the cool—as if there was ever any cool in this blaaze of a plaace—and we goes in a ship of our own, without so much as a English dog aboard of it."

"To-night!" said Lady Anne.

"Oh, Molly, can't you manage for me to see Grace before she goes?"

"If you wes to dress up like one of they nuns, with a necklace-dinged up to your waist, you might be let in—but not else.

"There's orders again it."

"Orders against admitting me?"

"You, or anybody except the oni, bony, macaroni folks and the nuns.

"Now I must go, or I shall be missed.

"I couldn't have got away if the packing hadn't made their weak furrin heads quite whizzy."

Molly turned swiftly to the door; but Lady Anne caught her by the hand, and detained her a moment longer.

"What time to-night, Molly, do you start?"

"I dunno.

"Nobody knows.

"Only it's in the cool, when the ship's ready.

"That's aal I can tell 'ee."

With this Molly departed, leaving Lady Anne bewildered and anxious.

When she carried her news to her aunt, that Lady ordered her carriage and drove to the Valdivia Palace, and demanded an interview with the Duke.

After a minute's delay she was admitted to his presence.

CHAPTER XLIV.

IN the dim curtained light Lady Brentwyche scarcely recognized the man who rose to receive her.

He was sadly changed—more changed in the last few weeks of his life than in years of exile.

Grief had aged him faster than prisons and chains.

"I have understood it all," said Lady Brentwyche, taking his thin hand in hers.

"You have seemed cruel, but you are not cruel; you are acting under orders."

He shrank back in his large chair, in which his gaunt frame seemed scarcely more than a skeleton's, and bowed his head in assent.

"Delgado is a useful man—very useful to the society; they wish for this marriage, they demand it of me.

"I can only obey," he said, clasping his hands tightly before him.

"I remember my oath, that I would sacrifice my nearest and dearest if the cause required it, that I would obey even unto death."

"There are sacrifices that are unnatural," said Lady Brentwyche, in a broken voice; "this is one of them.

"It would be horrible to marry your daughter to a man she loathes."

"You have all sacrificed Grazia," he answered.

"Her innocence, her enthusiasm, her generous romance, her genius, have all been taken advantage of by yourself and the Englishman and——"

"Our society," interposed Lady Brentwyche.

"The vital need of all these societies is funds—always funds, and again funds.

"Grazia's wonderful talent was too great a temptation; she was willing to sell it; they bought it."

"The bargain was to your advantage and theirs; and again at the root of all was that Englishman, the man to whom I owe years of such suffering that language has no words to tell it—the man who took my daughter into his house as a servant—the man who is a traitor and a spy!"

"I do not believe he was ever a spy," said Lady Brentwyche, in a voice that was scarce above a whisper.

"Your disbelief is strange.

"In that one dreadful instance of which we know, either he played the spy or it was you who took that dastard part.

"The three others who were present sealed their truth with their lives.

"Two died on the scaffold, and one beneath the prison scourge.

"Are you come here to plead the cause of such a man?"

Lady Brentwyche had buried her face in her hands; when she raised it, every vestige of color had fled from cheeks and lips.

She had made a great effort, she had forced down a rising shriek, a cry that would have been a confession.

"I am come to plead Grazia's cause," she said hoarsely.

"There is no need.

"I am her father; there is no love around her greater than mine.

"What false pretense is this that would make it appear I did not care for her?" he asked.

Lady Brentwyche gazed at him in wonder.

"Can love be cruel?" she said.

"I am not cruel," he answered hotly.

"You will acknowledge, I presume, that a marriage between Lord Enderby and Grazia is impossible?

"Years ago he was justly condemned to die, and the lot fell——"

Lady Brentwyche held up a trembling hand to stay his words.

"You need not go on," she said.

"I know it—they cannot marry—she knows it too."

"And, knowing it, she spares me what pain she can," he answered.

"The society does also.

"Aware of my infirmities through long imprisonment, they have accepted a substitute."

"I thought so," said Lady Brentwyche,

interrupting him in a strange voice, while her eyes grew fixed and dreadful.

"So Lord Enderby may die soon—may die any day?"

"I don't know," he answered.

"I have declined to know."

Over his pale face there spread a gray ashen hue as he spoke, and his head drooped on his breast.

"I don't know how you may feel: but I feel that all this is horrible," said Lady Brentwyche, "cruel, unjust, ghastly!"

"You forget how many deaths he caused.

"These condemnations of traitors and informers I look upon as a terrible necessity.

"Without them, our society would become the prey and victim of licensed cruelty, and we should soon all perish."

"And why not?" asked Lady Brentwyche, with sudden passion.

"What have we done but plot and assassinate and shock the world with horrors?"

"We shall save the world—we are saving it!" he cried in answer, the revolutionary madness in him glowing on his face.

"But for us, murder and rapine would be kings; we stand between the 'madness of the people' and a ruined world—we hold them back, we stay the upheaval of the great earthquake fast approaching.

"The old foundations are shaken; when they fall, when the whole fabric of society is a heap of confusion and wreck, then it will understand what dogs of war we have held back in the leash."

"We have no time now to discuss these subjects," said Lady Brentwyche.

"Let the world slide.

"My heart is full of other things.

"I cannot take back your dreadful news to Anne.

"Is there no hope, no chance of reprieve?"

"If he were to cease his pursuit of Grazia and return to England, I believe there would be such a chance.

"At present he is interfering with their plans and wishes."

"With Delgado's, you mean?"—and she shivered, and set her teeth upon her lip to still its shaking.

"Perhaps so," he said uneasily.

"Perhaps he attributes Grazia's hate to her lover's presence here.

"Tell him to go back to England if he wishes to save his life.

"I am a gentleman—I have no wish to stab in the dark."

"You were a gentleman before you were a Nihilist, and behind the Nihilist there still hides the gentleman.

"You understand courtesy, you know something of the largeness and glory of compassion—forgive this man and save him!" cried Lady Brentwyche; and, rising suddenly, she came forward and threw herself upon her knees and laid her hands across the Duke's hands, which trembled.

"I have no power, no influence," he answered, feebly striving to free his quivering fingers from her clasp.

"As a martyr, as a victim who had suffered so terribly, you have a right to ask a favor," she pleaded, tears in her voice and eyes.

"Do you think you are the first who has said this to me?

"Do you think Grazia has not broken her patient silence and wept before me such tears as angel's know?

"At her prayer I forgave the man.

"I did more—I pleaded for him.

"But there is another who has greater influence than I.

"I gained my prayer only on a condition—instant return to England.

"If he refuses, if he stays, his blood will be upon his own head."

Lady Brentwyche released the pale hands she held, but she pressed her forehead on them; and the Duke felt her warm tears fall.

"Anne—poor Anne!" she sobbed.

"It is her life you have saved too—and mine also," she added to herself.

"For I could not see Enderby die in my stead.

"No, my life would not be worth to me such a cruel lie as that.

"And to see Anne perish slowly day by day—Anne, who has always loved me, always believed in me!

"No, I could not do that.

"I could not look on her and know I was his true murderer, and had cruelly slain her too—the creature that loved me best.

"Life then would not be worth a light straw upon the wind.

"How I clung to life once!

"And now I see dimly that there are times when it is easier and better to die than to live."

She rose from her knees and took her seat again, calm and composed.

When a reprieve comes to us, when in sickness we are told that the dread Shadow has passed, and we shall have light and gladness and see fair days again, we do not weep or cry; we close our eyes in thankfulness, and a few silent tears fall, and our lips breathe an unspoken prayer, and we lie still and quiet.

"He shall go back to England," she said presently.

"I promise you that.

"Grazia will help?"

"Grazia will help," the Duke repeated, looking down upon his wan hands curiously, as if he saw there something unseen by all eyes but his.

"Be frank with me," said Lady Brentwyche, "and tell me your plans for Grazia.

"Enderby will not leave while in dismay and anguish for her."

"There is no need—no need!" cried the Duke passionately.

"Am I not her father?

"Shall I give my child to a leopard?

"Shall I throw her to a wild beast?"

"Thank God!" said Lady Brentwyche, not wondering at herself that she dared to breathe a name so seldom on her lips.

"You must be cautious," resumed the Duke, in a subdued tone.

"Remember, I have to temporize with this man.

"He is a power in our society, for it has need of such men, and offence must not be given to him heedlessly.

"I understand how he has induced them to put pressure upon me; doubtless he has promised them Grazia's services again upon the stage if he marries her.

"But—but, you see, a father does not sell his child, even to further the freedom of the world!"

Lady Brentwyche only lifted her eyebrows slightly, and waved her hand to him to go on.

"So, to save herself and me, Grazia takes the veil," he said, still looking down upon his hands and clasping and unclasping his thin fingers, in a strange way.

"It will be a horrible sacrifice!" she answered in slow accents, as if the words were drawn out of her by torture.

"Not so.

"I give her to Heaven; she will be happy."

"So was Jeptha's daughter—perhaps," said his listener, in the same, slow way.

"Eh, what?

"You torture me!" cried the Duke, rising tremblingly, and falling back into the chair again.

"Cannot you see this is the sole way—the sole way by which I can save her?

"And there are other reasons."

"Yes," said Lady Brentwyche; "let me hear your earthly reasons, and we will not talk of Heaven."

"You know, when Grazia quitted the stage, they lost a great income, and I promised to make good that loss.

"To do that I have pledged my revenues for five years to come, and I have paid a heavy forfeit to the theatre here.

"So I have no dowry to give Grazia: without a dowry we do not marry daughters in our country.

"An Italian noble would expect a great dowry, but the convent takes a small one."

"These are poor reasons indeed, to my English mind."

"But they are great ones in Italy," he answered.

"And you see"—again looking down upon his hands and clasping them—"I am a gentleman.

"I do not ask a noble to take my daughter without a dowry befitting her rank."

"Oh, leave these reasons, Duke," cried Lady Brentwyche, "and speak out plainly the bitter truth!"

"Yes, yes, the truth—I think I will trust you with it—you will not betray me.

"My hands here"—and he spread them out in a wild way—"have worked at strange hard toil, but they have never been soiled with—laugh!—I cannot speak the word.

"You understand—that terrible lot fell on me, they excused it, they passed it on.

"That was like a stone taken from my heart.

"Something was asked in return; and, in my joy at that burden being lifted, I said 'Yes,' not thinking what Grazia would feel.

"And, now that I have gone back from my word, they tell me that the sole way to pacify this cruel suitor will be to let Grazia pass out of all men's sight within the cloister."

He stopped, and there was a moment of dead silence within the high-roofed room, for Lady Brentwyche could find no words with which to answer him.

She was questioning her own soul as to its strength to quit the earthly life she loved.

"Am I demon or woman," she said to herself, "that I should cause this mountain of sorrow to fall on an innocent head and not touch the burden lest it should crush myself?

"But no—I cannot die; it is too terrible" and she gathered herself together with a great shudder.

"Enderby will go back to England and safety, and Grazia—Grazia will be happy in her convent."

"Well, have you no word to say?" asked the Duke.

"You see there are no other means?"

She could not tell; but she answered hopefully, eagerly.

"We have a yacht in the bay.

"Let Grazia go to England."

"Would she go, knowing her flight would bring instant death to her lover?

"I have thought of all these things," said the Duke, again looking at his hands.

"I have weighed them on all sides.

"I have prayed her vainly for my sake to flee to a distant land; but her love for me is not so great as this other love.

"She chooses the convent to save him.

"I cannot move her."

"Then further words are useless," returned Lady Brentwyche, speaking, as before, with unwonted slowness.

"I will leave you now."

"One moment more," said the Duke eagerly.

"I should like to explain a little more clearly—I mean you must not think too ill of me for this.

"You are a woman whom I esteem.

"You saved danger, imprisonment, death, to come to me in my exile, and bring me comfort and help.

"You took a long, hard, painful journey, you did not spare yourself fatigue and risk, that you might speak a few words of hope to a poor prisoner.

"I do not forget it.

"You have a generous heart, a brave spirit."

But here he stopped, for Lady Brentwyche was looking at him with a death-white face, her figure shrinking as though some withering fire were passing over her.

"Ah, you do not like to be praised!" said the Duke wistfully.

"I will excuse myself no more.

"But I did not know that man when I accepted his suit.

"And it was to save—save these hands of mine.

"Yes, a lot is a blind thing.

"I am not a man fit——"

"No, I am more fit," said Lady Brentwyche, interrupting him in a measured, quiet tone.

"I was born poor, and I was made desperate.

"Despair and poverty and wrath can do mad things.

"Let us talk of Grace.

"She will find peace within holy walls; she will not be unhappy."

"You think not?" he cried eagerly.

"I too believe she will be happy.

"A pure exalted life will fulfil her aspirations.

"And she will be greatly beloved by the sisters.

"Yes, yes, it is the best lot I could choose for her.

"For, you see, she would never marry."

"No," said Lady Brentwyche quietly.

"And on festival days I shall go to the convent," he continued, "and, though I shall not see her, yet from behind the grating that shuts out the world I shall hear her glorious voice chanting praises and sweet hymns.

"There will be infinite peace and consolation in her voice.

"You are going?

"Yes; thank you for this visit.

"It has been a relief to lift slightly the burden of silence on my heart.

"When you hear the world speak of me and of Grazia, you will smile, you will close your lips over your own thoughts and understand. The convent is in the mountains, near the old chateau I have there.

"I mean to live there always.

"I shall go often to the chapel to hear her voice, and in fancy I shall see her face, though the grating shuts her from my sight.

"Perhaps I shall know her as I catch dimly a glimpse of the black robes as they float by.

"Oh, yes, I shall certainly know her.

"You think I shall?"

"Doubtless," said Lady Brentwyche, with just a slight tremor in her tone.

"I cannot stay longer.

"Good-bye."

She looked back at him when she reached the door—for in his misery he had forgotten courtesy, and had not accompanied her; he had shrunk back in his chair, his face hidden in his thin hands, his white hair falling over them.

CHAPTER XLV.

"OH, auntie, if you had been here, this would not have happened!" cried Lady Anne.

Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes red with weeping.

"What has happened?" asked Lady Brentwyche, looking round the saloon eagerly.

"Where is Alan?

"Where is your brother?"

"Gone!

"I entreated Soulis never to leave Alan, and he has promised me that he will not even for an hour."

"Gone!" repeated Lady Brentwyche.

"But where!"

"They would not tell me; but I fear they have sailed for Sicily.

"In the yacht?"

"Yes," said Lady Anne.

"And I think Soulis has planned some foolish wild scheme by which he hopes to take Grace away."

"It will be of no avail, Anne; and we must telegraph to Soulis.

"He must take advantage of Enderby's being in the yacht to sail with him for England at once.

"He must not let him land even."

"No telegram will prevent that," said Anne sadly.

"They will both get themselves into some dreadful trouble."

"Trouble indeed!" returned her aunt.

"Why have they gone in this sudden way Anne?"

"The yacht was ready for a trip, and they both came here directly you were gone, and I told them what Molly had said.

"Then I saw, by the way they looked at each other, that they would take the yacht round to Palermo."

"And you could not stop them?"

"Oh, aunt, what could I do?

"What could I say that would stop them?"

"I don't know, child," said Lady Brentwyche, in a strange voice.

"If they really go to Palermo, my telegram will reach Soulis: but they may put in at another port.

"It will depend on the wind as they are sailing."

"But will it matter much, aunt?

"Your telegram will not stop them from doing what they have made up their minds to do."

"It shall—it must stop them," said Lady Brentwyche, with a strange fixed expression on her face.

"Surely, Anne, they will not go up into the mountains to the Duke's chateau?"

"Yes, yes, they will—I am certain they will!" cried Anne.

"I will go down to the quay," said Lady Brentwyche.

"I may be in time to stop them."

She rang the bell hurriedly, and ordered the carriage to return that had just set her down.

In an incredibly short time she was on the jetty by which the yacht had lain at anchor.

It was not there.

A snow-white sail shone out against the blue sky, and was shadowed in the bluer sea.

"That's the English Count's yacht," said a Greek sailor, pointing to it; "but the wind's not fair for Palermo.

"I think they'll have to try Messina."

Lady Brentwyche drove away with an odd sensation at her heart.

She had been agitated by her interview with the Duke; this unexpected departure of Lord Enderby's agitated her still more.

She could could not foresee what would become of it—what mad adventure Lord Soulis might prevail on him to undertake.

One thing alone was certain—his return to England would be delayed, her promise that he should go instantly would be broken.

Perhaps, having failed to stop the yacht, she might persuade the Duke to remain at Naples.

She was too late.

Italian fashion, it was already shut up.

The Duke and his retinue had left by their steamer half an hour before.

Now there was nothing left to do but to send urgent telegrams to Lord Soulis both at Messina and Palermo, in the change of one of them reaching him.

After she had done this, she sat back in the carriage, feeling strangely shaken in mind, and bewildered by the many plans of action that presented themselves like visions before her tired brain.

Should she follow them to Palermo?

Should she see the Duke and Grace?

No, this would be worse than useless; it would only bring on Grace an agony of fear.

It was better she should remain in ignorance that her lover had followed, or rather preceded her to Sicily.

Unless he went up the mountains to the very spot whither she had gone, there would be no chance of their meeting.

And perhaps Delgado would never know Lord Enderby was on the island.

It was no small insignificant place.

Among two millions of people surely a stranger might pass unnoticed.

But there was the yacht; either in the harbor of Messina or Palermo she might attract notice, being a large handsome schooner so beautifully fitted up that some curiosity would certainly be evoked by her appearance, and the name of her owner would be asked for.

Delgado—where was he?

She had not seen him for a fortnight.

Since Gregory's crushing blow, he had kept his room.

She would drive to his hotel and inquire for him.

"The signor Delgado?" said a waiter.

Oh, yes, he was better—much better! He left two days ago.

Did the signora wish to know where he was gone?

Yes; then he would inquire.

The man came again to the carriage door, after a slow minute that seemed an hour.

The porter had taken the signor's luggage to the Palermo boat; this was all he knew.

Lady Brentwyche took a double dose of chloral that night, but she slept little, and looked in the morning so haggard and ill that Lady Anne sent for a physician to attend her.

She was ordered to keep her bed.

She obeyed for two days; then, in a fever of impatience, she arose, and met Lord Tweslands and Gregory in her saloon.

There was no news of the yacht, no answer to the telegrams.

"Don't be anxious, Anne," said her father; "those two young fellows are enjoying themselves. It is a perfect lolly to be uneasy on their account."

But the next day, when he came to them, he wore an anxious look on his usually happy face.

"Some fellows on board the Sicilian boat have brought a queer report from Palermo. They say that two young Englishmen who landed from a yacht and went up the mountains for an excursion have been seized by brigands, who demand an enormous ransom.

"But don't be alarmed; it is not at all likely to be Enderby and Soulis.

"There are plenty of yachts besides the 'Petrel,' and a great many English at Palermo."

It was easy to see that he was alarmed himself.

Anne face was white as snow; Lady Brentwyche's was burning with fever, and her eyes were wide and dilated.

"I think you had better go to Palermo at once," she said to Lord Tweslands, in a strangely quiet voice.

"And Gregory shall go with you. It would be useless to send him alone, as he cannot speak Italian."

"Let us hear something more definite first," said Lord Tweslands. "Anne don't fret. Soulis will be all right—he always falls on his feet, and Enderby is rich enough to pay ransom for both. But what can one think of a country where brigands are real live facts?"

Anne rung her hands together, without giving her any answer.

He went out to make inquiries, and returned in less than half an hour.

"The report is true," he said gravely. "And—yes—the men are Enderby and Soulis.

"It is thought one of them will be allowed to come away on parole to fetch the ransom.

"Most likely Soulis will be sent, as he speaks Italian well. So, at all events, he will be safe, Anne."

But Anne made no reply.

Her head had fallen on her chair, and she had fainted.

Lady Brentwyche attended to her very quietly; she was both calm and self-possessed.

When Anne recovered, she laid her upon a couch, and again pressed Gregory and the Marquis to hire a small steamer, and depart at once.

She signed and gave them a blank cheque.

"Fill it up for any sum demanded," she said.

"I will manage the matter with the bank here, and a telegram shall be sent to Palermo to the bank there. But be speedy in all you do. Don't cavil, don't negotiate, pay at once. Time—time is everything. Get Enderby out of their hands at once. Gregory, stand by him to the death. I rely on you."

"A party of soldiers will most assuredly be sent to seize the miscreants," said the Marquis; "and then Blake and I will have a fair shot at them."

Lady Brentwyche turned swiftly and laid her hand upon his arm.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

BARBARA GRAHAM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWICE MARRIED," "MABEL MAY," ETC.

CHAPTER XL.

THE last sad rites were over, the weeping parents were secluded in the chamber which had witnessed the last moments of the child; and Barbara, weary and exhausted with the long watchings, the various painful duties, and the sufferings of mind and body she had undergone, had thankfully sought her own chamber, to indulge undisturbed the thoughts of the past, the plans for the future, which had been so long crushed down, so smothered in her anxiety and grief for other, dependent on her care.

She had closed Pauline's eyes, watched in the death-chamber, tended the weak, sorrowing mother, comforted the deeper yet more silent grief of the father, and at times spoken words of cheering sympathy to the calm but sad and serious sorrow of the betrothed.

And now, when all was over, when nothing more was to be done, thoughts of her own future, of the course that must now be chosen, of the absent loved one, for whom she would have given up life itself, came back with renewed force on her mind; and she sat in her own lonely chamber in the deep mourning garb she had that day assumed, and her pale face, even whiter from the contrast with the sable dress and equally sable hair that had escaped from the band and hung in long profusion over her form.

It had been as yet impossible to arrange any plans with the bereaved parents; to speak of leaving them in their grief and sorrow would have been actual cruelty while the first torture was on their hearts.

But now Barbara felt that she owed too pressing a duty to Sidney Ashley, and to her own feelings of love and honor, and justice, for her to risk the chance of discovery which a longer residence with them would render almost a certain result.

If they should decide on a plan, which some broken expression of the Colonel's had once made her think a possible one, the difficulty would be removed.

He had said in one of his paroxysms of sorrow and despair, that he could never bear again the places associated with the lovely form and bright voice and laugh of his lost child, and that long months or years of absence from his native land would be the sole chance of calming this natural feeling.

But Barbara now seemed to discard this idea as an improbable and unfeasible one, and her mind busied itself with strange energy on plans for her own effectual disappearance from a scene where she would bring ruin and loss on him she would have sacrificed all to save.

Barbara sat long, musing earnestly and sadly on the various plans that suggested themselves, rejecting each in turn as hazardous and useless under circumstances which would, she knew, give fresh keenness to Sidney Ashley's search for her; and at the last, in a sort of impatient despair at her own failure, she started up and began to examine the belongings she had brought with her from Ashley Court, and which had remained in confusion and disarrangement during Pauline's illness, and the consequent and duties after her death.

She opened the large, handsome, foreign-looking trunk which the good housekeeper had confided to her, and began to empty it of its confused and tumbled contents, in order to define and place them once more in readiness for any sudden emergency.

One by one, the articles of apparel, the books, and the manuscripts that large trunk contained were taken out and examined, and laid on the floor beside her, as she crouched on the soft, rich carpet that spoke of the wealth and luxury of which the young Pauline had once been the heiress. And as each article she examined brought back some old memory, some half-forgotten words or circumstances connected with the past, the large tears came unbidden to her eyes and blinded her view, till she impatiently dashed them from her cheek.

The long and dreary task went on more slowly and wearily than could be accounted for, save by Barbara's over-exhausted frame, but the last contents of the box were apparently reached and examined.

Then she put her hand half dreamily into the recesses of that large old trunk, and passed it over its whole space, to see whether any tiny object had escaped her search.

As she did so, a strange, thick protuberance attracted her attention.

It felt as if one of her manuscripts had hidden itself under some soft substance, and she tried in vain to extract it from its covering, till, with an exclamation of impatience, she half rose from her crouching posture, and looked into the deep recess of the trunk.

There was no mistake.

There was certainly a flat, thick substance of paper under the lining of that old-fashioned, ponderous box; and on more minute examination, Barbara saw that there were holes in the substantial lining, that might, perhaps, have allowed some treacherous manuscript to insert itself within its folds, and which had, probably, been intended for some such purpose.

She was some minutes in discovering the opening which had admitted the paper; for it almost seemed that the recess had been contrived for the express purpose of concealment; but at last she found the edge of a thick manuscript protruding from a half-hidden recess, and drawing it safely from its hiding-place, she brought it to the light, to see which of her various manuscripts had given her so much trouble.

One glance showed Barbara that it was no woman's writing which that thick yellow paper bore on it, and that the pale ink was written on it many a long year before her hand had known how to trace characters, or her young eyes had opened on the light.

It was a document written in a bold masculine hand, and on paper almost like parchment in its substance, which even to her inexperienced eyes bore the aspect of a legal document.

It was clearly no property of hers; and yet the exigencies of the case made it perfectly lawful, and even necessary, to examine the character and contents of the paper which had so unexpectedly come into her possession.

Barbara drew the lamp nearer to her, carefully unfolded the yellow sheet, and began to read.

As she went on, an exclamation of surprise, then a bright warm color on her cheeks, a smile on her lips, a brilliant, happy light in her eyes, betrayed some deep and pleasurable emotion; and as she concluded, an expression of thanksgiving burst from her lips.

Again her eyes glanced over the document, as if afraid that she had mistaken its character.

She examined the date, the signature, and the contents with keen and eager scrutiny; and once more the light broke over her face and her lips moved in fervent gratitude.

A strange, uncommon girl was Barbara.

That paper, which excited such deep thankfulness in her heart, would have brought grief and mortification and disappointment to ordinary minds.

It was perhaps an informal document, so far as legal forms went; but to Barbara it was one conclusive as Holy Writ.

It was a paper written by Sir Gervase Ashley on the eve, as it appeared, of his sudden death.

And it seemed as if the unconscious approach of that awful hour had softened and melted the hard, stern feelings of the old man towards his natural and lawful heir.

It revoked the will made in favor of his daughter Florence, and devised the estates which, by right and descent, belonged to the male heir of the line of Ashley, to his second and only surviving son, Philip Ashley, and his heirs lawfully begotten.

That informal document was not witnessed, but it was so clearly worded, the date and signature so distinctly written, the state of mind so positively evinced in every word and line, that Barbara thanked God that Sidney Ashley would now be, in all right, and justice, and indisputable title enabled to claim and possess his own, without the humiliation of being indebted to her, or the sense that he was enjoying what could be claimed by another.

Perhaps, as the first bright joy and exultation passed away, she began to feel some natural desolation of heart at the complete severing of any tie between them, by the discovery of that conclusive document.

He would no longer have even a motive for seeking her; he would owe her no gratitude, feel no tie to the descendant of a relative who had so nearly robbed him of his own rightful possessions.

Barbara was a noble-minded, generous, devoted woman, but it was not in woman's nature to yield every claim to the gratitude the tender remembrance, the warm interest of the man she loved.

But the more unworthy, more selfish feeling soon passed away, and she was heartily glad that Sidney Ashley was saved from hardship and poverty, which would have been such bitter humiliation and remorse to his proud nature.

Besides, it made her own path plainer; she had nothing to dread now, nothing but the life of joyless, loveless labor that must from henceforth be her portion.

Well, be it so.

Her task in life appeared done.

She had witnessed Pauline's deathbed, she had been discarded by her sister Lillian as unworthy of her love and regard; she had nursed Claudia back to life and health, only to see her treachery to one, only too noble, too lofty for her sympathies or comprehension; she had saved Sidney Ashley from ruin, and what remained?

Nothing but the dull, weary routine of lonely labor to support life's joyless needs.

And yet her heart told her she had such large capacities of enjoyment, such powers of loving, such intense sympathy for all that was noble, and true, and good, that such enforced deprivation was hard and bitter indeed.

A knock at the door startled Barbara from her sweet yet bitter thoughts.

It was Mary, Pauline's maid, with eyes swollen with weeping, and a face pale with grief and watching.

"If you please, Miss Barbara," she began, "my master, poor dear gentleman, wants to see you.

"Will you step into his own room, Miss?"

Barbara hastily secured the precious document, and smoothing her hair, went down stairs to the private room, where the Colonel was awaiting her.

The old man was pale, and his face bore proofs of the tears that had flowed down his cheeks since the loss of his child, and his eyes were red and heavy with loss of sleep and weeping.

He held out his hand to the young girl as she entered, and drew her to him with a paternal look of grateful affection.

"My child," he said, gazing at her, "I have been selfish in so long disregarding your health and comfort.

"You look worn and sad as if our loss had touched you too deeply for one so young, and who should be so buoyant.

"It is time that I should think of you, the only one link that seems left with my lost Pauline."

He paused for a few minutes to force back the emotion that well-nigh choked him.

Barbara sat down on a low chair by his side, and only expressed her sympathy by an affectionate pressure of the hand that held hers.

She feared to soften him by any warmer expression of sympathy.

"Barbara Graham," he resumed, after a short pause, "listen to me.

"I am rich; and, alas! childless; you are poor and an orphan.

"To you I owe the peace and resignation of my darling's death-bed; nay, more, it is to you that her escape from a sudden and terrible death is due.

"It was her dying, aye, literally, her dying prayer, that I would place you beyond the reach of anxiety or labor by a settlement which should be a monument of your departed friend; but I would fain do more—I would take you to my home and my heart as my adopted child, as one who would recall, and in some measure fill up the void in both my house and my affection by Pauline's death.

"Nay, hear me out—I do not propose even to endow you with half that would eventually have been Pauline's, had she lived, but I will settle on you sufficient to prevent your ever feeling the change, should you, by our death, be left once more to the self-dependence from which I take you; in which case you might go to the house of some one worthy of you with an equality of position that befits my adopted child.

"Barbara, will you come?"

Barbara's eyes were full of tears, but she did not hesitate.

"I cannot come," she said, "I cannot.

"Do not ask it."

"Why not, my dear?" said the old man, kindly.

"Can you doubt the sincerity of my offer, my desire to retain you in my family?"

"No," she replied; "I trust you from my heart, my kind friend, but it is impossible.

"I should be wretched!—it cannot be."

"Child, child, I cannot understand you," he said, a slight gloom settling over his features.

"Can I believe that you still cherish resentment for the past?

"You have proved your forgiveness, your love for my Pauline.

"Will you desert her parents in their bereavement and desolation?"

Barbara was half kneeling at his feet now, and her tears were flowing fast down her cheeks.

"No, no," she said, in broken accents, "I will not leave you till you have in some measure recovered from your grief; but it must be only as a guest, a dependent, if you will, not as an adopted child.

"I must be free—independent.

"I should be wretched were I bound even to you.

"Mrs. Forbes would get weary of me, and I should become irksome to her, or perhaps worse.

"Dear friend, my dear Pauline's father, I entreat you, do not ask it of me!"

"My child, you are proud, too proud," said the Colonel, with a sad, perplexed look.

"Why not cling to those who would love you, protect you, supply the place of parents to you in your loneliness?

"Your heart is a loving one; it craves for love and sympathy, and yet you repel it, cast it from you.

"Is this right, is it wise, is it kind, my child?"

Barbara's eyes were still swimming, but her heart was firm.

"I am grateful, deeply grateful," she said; "but we should all repent were I to consent to your kind offer.

"While you really need me, I will remain, but there must be no question of adoption nor settlement, my dear, kind friend.

"Let me be your comfort, your attendant—your slave, if you will—so long as this great sorrow rankles in your heart; and then, let me go once more into the wide world to fulfil my duty, as best I may."

There was something inexpressibly touching in the tone of Barbara's last words which took from them all bitterness or harshness to repel the gushing kindness of the Colonel's sad heart.

He stooped down to kiss her brow, then rose, and bidding her wait for him a few minutes, he left the room.

Barbara remained, sadly musing on the pain which this apparent ungraciousness to the stricken old man gave to her own heart as well as to his, and the minutes passed without her noticing the time that had elapsed since the Colonel had left her.

It was however a quarter of an hour ere the door again opened, and looking up to meet the old man's kind, sad face, with an assurance of her gratitude and regard, she met the grave eyes of Ernest Forbes.

He came forward, without apparent surprise, and took a seat by her side.

"My uncle has sent me to argue a point which he has much at heart," he said.

"And I gladly embrace the opportunity which he thus gave me of speaking with you, for I, too, have much to say."

"Sir Ernest," she replied, with more self-possession and reserve than she could have displayed to the kind old sorrowing man, "I do entreat that you will not urge Colonel Forbes's generous offer further. I have quite decided, and nothing could shake my determination.

"It is impossible, simply impossible," she repeated.

"I am bound to respect any wish of yours," he said; "but at least let me plead for a hearing in the last interview that I may perhaps have with you."

"The last, Sir Ernest?" she said, looking up quickly.

"What! Are you going away at once?"

"I am glad that you can feel even so much interest in my movements," he said sadly, yet half sullingly.

"Yes, I think I shall go abroad for a time. My aunt and uncle may perhaps follow me when they have a little recovered from this heavy blow, but at present I feel they are almost pained by my presence."

Barbara was about to speak, but he stopped her abruptly.

"It was not of that, however, that I was about to speak to you," he said, "but of a subject that may perhaps seem indelicate and abrupt; and yet I must learn at once your feelings and views, and try to shape my future course accordingly. Barbara, you are no common woman, to start at false delicacies, or to put the weighty qualities and duties of life in competition with faint or idle caprices. I know Pauline confided in you the great, and secret of her young life; and perhaps—nay, I am almost sure—she told you also mine."

"Sir Ernest," said Barbara, her cheeks now flushing like crimson, "please do not allude to our poor Lina's too-fanciful sensitiveness.

"It is most painful for me think of, and it must be still more painful for you to feel that she could mistake herself and you so sadly."

"Barbara," said he, "it is no time for disguise or false delicacy.

"Pauline did not mistake either my feelings, or the want of congeniality that existed between us.

"Nay, do not start and look so reprovingly horrified at me.

"My conscience is clear, so far as that poor girl is concerned, for I never deceived her, Barbara; and if she was not equally guileless, she has made a noble and ample atonement.

"I can truly say that I never loved her in life as I do in death—that she was never so worthy of being my wife, as now, when she has gone from me forever; and yet, Barbara, my heart never was, and never could have been hers."

His voice trembled with emotion as he spoke those last words, and Barbara's momentary indignation vanished as she read the unmistakable proofs of his sincerity and delicate consideration for both herself and Pauline.

"And yet she was so beautiful, so loving," she murmured, half-musingly.

"True, true, most true," he said, a sad smile crossing his features, "and yet she could never have been aught to me but a dear, dear sister, even had the bond which united us been cemented by the sacred ring.

"And she knew it, Barbara, she knew the real choice of my heart; and though her woman's weakness may have led her astray, it was true woman's nobleness that prompted the frank avowal, the unselfish desire of her last moments.

"Barbara, she told me, with almost her last breath, that her wish was for my true happiness—that she could die happy if she believed you would supply the place she had thought to occupy as regards myself.

"Shall it not be so, dear one?"

His hand took her cold fingers in its warm grasp, she did not withdraw them, but they rested motionless and dead in the pressure, and his face clouded as he gazed at her half-averted face.

"Barbara," said he, "listen ere you reply.

"Since the day I first saw you in that obscure room, and heard the tones of your delicious voice, my heart has been yours; I have never ceased to cherish the hope that I might be more to you than a friend.

"You have constantly repelled that feeling; you have uniformly treated me with a coldness, an indifference, that proved to

me that I was nothing more to you than a friend, but still I hoped on.

"I thought that your coldness might be even purposely affected, and that if the day came when I could openly, boldly ask you to be my wife, your feelings would change, or at least the expression of them.

"That time is not yet come; but the time for confessing my true sentiments to you has arrived, thanks to the unselfishness, the lovingness of her who is gone.

"Barbara, I love you, deeply, unalterably.

"My heart is too entirely yours to be lightly rejected.

"I can wait patiently, wait for years, if you will; but I must hope.

"I know that you do not love me now, but I must hope.

"I know that you do not love me now, but I cannot believe that such love as mine can fail to win yours at last.

"I shall leave you.

"I will not weary you with professions and attentions that would never prevail with a nature like yours, but I trust to the influence of time; the knowledge of my deep love, that has survived disappointment, long absence, and vows to another, will gradually win on your heart, and ask you at least to trust yourself to me; and till then, Barbara, should circumstances occur that may demand the aid or counsel of devoted friendship, forget that I am a lover, and do not hesitate to claim me as a friend.

"I am going away; but a line, a word will recall me.

"The separation will be very painful to me, but not so much so as to intrude myself on your presence.

"If, as I earnestly hope, the hour, however distant, should come, when you desire to see me, then, Barbara, how joyfully will I hasten to you, and——"

Barbara had listened, breathless and spell-bound to the low, heartfelt, calm words that fell soothingly yet sadly on her ear, and her tears flowed freely and silently, as each noble, disinterested sentence found its way to her heart, rather than her brain.

But as the first surprise and emotion passed away, and she woke to a consciousness of the real, intense, devoted love, the absorbing hopes that were so vainly cherished for her, a sorrow and sympathy, painful in its keenness, pierced her.

She laid her hand on his, and pressed it to her lips with a tearful earnestness that spoke louder than words to his quick, delicate sense.

"Sir Ernest," said she, "it can never be.

"We can never be more than friends.

"I honor, esteem, nay, love you, as the most affectionate, devoted sister; but what you ask is impossible."

"Barbara," he returned, looking sadly on her, "you are alone in the world; and I, the child of prosperity, have scarcely more ties than yourself to bind me to earth.

"Will you doom us both to a solitary, joyless life?—unless, indeed, there is any other who has striven, like myself, and unlike myself, succeeded in gaining your heart!

"If so, from this moment my lips are sealed, though you may ever command my most devoted unwearied friendship."

Barbara made no reply, save by a sudden withdrawal of her hand, and a half indignant flush on her pale cheek, that gave a charm-like beauty to her features.

"I am answered," he said gently.

"I will not pain you by further entreaties for explanation or for hope.

"But listen, Barbara.

"I can divine that whoever is the man blessed with your love, there are at least obstacles in your path, or you would have silenced me at once by telling me that you belonged to another.

"I ask no questions, no confidence on your part; but I only beg you to remember that one friend is yours; and that till I know that you are lost to me forever, I shall still hope.

"I may be doomed to disappointment, but at least I will not hasten it, nor lose my only chance of happiness by precipitancy."

He pressed his lips to her brow for a moment, and then turned slowly and noiselessly from the room.

CHAPTER XLI.

IT is to a different and yet somewhat similar scene from the dying chamber of the young and beautiful Pauline, to which we now pass.

Instead of the spacious apartment, the luxurious appointments, the domestics waiting for every look and word, the young, thoughtful, calm nurse, the grave, tender mother, the venerable father, which formed the accompaniments of Pauline's death-bed, was a simply-furnished and lowly room, a grave, elderly woman sitting by the sick-bed, and a lovely, half-excited looking girl, whose eyes were fixed on the door of the room as if expecting some one to enter, whose arrival was anxiously looked for, yet half dreaded by the beautiful watcher.

The tenant of that plain, yet scrupulously neat bed, was as different from Pauline Forbes as the entourage from the interior of the youthful heiress's chamber.

It was the female whom we have more than once before introduced, and whose hours were now evidently numbered.

The finely-moulded features were wasted to emaciation; the eyes were brilliant from excitement, but hollow and dark, as if Death had already set his mark on the brow and cheek; and the restless movement of the limbs betokened to an experienced observer the approach of the last enemy.

Still she seemed to wrestle with the fast-increasing symptoms of dissolution, and with the proud resoluteness of her nature to repel the last ravages of disease till the work she desired to see accomplished was done.

She would not even exhaust her strength by speaking, lest the few remaining pulsations of her heart, the faint remnant of breath should cease before the time that might yet remain for her.

But her eyes turned restlessly to the door and from that to the beautiful creature whose youthful loveliness contrasted so strongly with her own faded and wasted features, and then for an instant would glance appealingly at the woman who formed the third figure in the little group.

"They will not be long," said the female in reply to one of these mute questionings.

"There is time yet, ample time, and the clocks perhaps do not agree."

The sufferer feebly shook her head, but resolutely kept from speaking, and concentrated her whole power in the senses of sight and hearing for another brief space.

Her self-control appeared at last to be rewarded.

The sound of footsteps was heard, quickly traversing the outer room.

Steps firm, strong, and masculine, and the cheeks of the fair young girl deepened into crimson as she caught the sounds, while the sufferer's wan face seemed to brighten for a few minutes into a hectic flush.

"Monica, open the door—quick!—quick!" she said, eagerly, and the female, with grave, unmoved deliberation of manner, obeyed the mandate.

Three figures entered; one was the mysterious arbiter, as it seemed, of the fate of so many among our characters.

There was a strange excitement on his face, as if crisis long expected, long planned, were at hand.

The second was also a familiar face and form—that of the youthful lover of the beautiful Claudia: but the third was a stranger, and to judge from his appearance and dress, belonging to the clerical profession.

Not that he was by any means one of the non-orthodox and irreproachably got-up of the clergy, for his face was graced or disfigured by a somewhat ragged beard and moustache, and his keen, restless eyes and gaunt figure and features scarce betokened the composedly significant mien of the English clergyman of the correct and dominant type. He lingered somewhat behind the others, and scarcely advanced within the doorway till the first greetings had passed between the other members of the group.

The lovers—for such of course they are known to be—exchanged a brief caress, while the older visitor advanced to the bedside, and spoke some words in a low tone to the sufferer.

"Yes, yes; only be quick," she said, and she motioned to Monica with a questioning, mute look.

"Are you ready?" he said.

The woman replied by moving a table opposite to the bed, on which was laid a large book, and before which were placed two thick cushions as hassocks.

The other stranger then came forward, and drew hastily over his shoulders a surplice, which had been hitherto half concealed under his arm, placed himself before the table, and opened the book at the marriage service.

The young Leonardo led Claudia forward to the temporary altar, while the elder stranger placed himself at her other side, gave a quick, sharp glance at the half-open door, and then motioned the clergyman to commence the service.

It was no sonorous, good, old-fashioned voice that sounded on the solitude of that sick chamber, in that solemn bridal service; but the more modern, and perhaps less reverent, high-toned notes, in which the Liturgy is so often read.

The style, the look, the very presence of the reverend gentleman was, however, lost in the absorbing interest of the moment, and the young Italian and Claudia was not, perhaps, really alive to anything but the consciousness that the rite now proceeding would give them to each other forever, and also secure to the bridegroom possessions which had otherwise been endangered, if not entirely lost to him.

And the witnesses of the ceremony appeared scarcely less absorbed in its importance, or less eager for its conclusion, than those more immediately concerned.

The invalid lay, with straining eyes and parched lips, her every sense appearing occupied in taking in the words that bound that young pair to each other.

But of the whole group, perhaps the one most deeply, strangely engrossed and interested was the mysterious stranger, whose agency had hitherto been so constantly at work.

He seemed to hang on every word, to gauge each moment that was occupied during the progress of the service till the decisive words were spoken, and the ring placed on the slender finger.

As the priest was pronouncing the solemn words:

"Those whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder," a quick step was heard traversing the outer room, then the door opened, and Sidney Ashley entered.

He stood motionless and speechless as the scene met his eyes, and scarcely heeded the warning gesture of the clergyman to forbear from disturbing the few remaining moments of the ceremony by word or movement.

There was a withering triumph in the stranger's eyes as he watched Sidney's stern features.

Ashley did not appear to regard it.

He only betrayed, by a firmer compression of the lips, and colder, sterner look in his eyes, that he felt aught but surprised at the spectacle before him.

At last, the short but eventful rite was over.

The adopted ward, the betrothed bride of Sidney Ashley, was the wife of another, and the eyes of the young bride met those of her former guardian for the first time.

A deep crimson, a shy, deprecating look; and then a quick, generous impulse stirred the young girl's heart.

She sprang forward, and would have taken his hand in hers, but he shrunk back from her touch with a cold look of utter disapproval.

It was not scorn—it was not anger; but something more crushing than either that Sidney's look expressed.

It spoke the deep, unchanging sense of her conduct, of her utter unworthiness, which alienated her from his heart forever; and even in that hour of early and gushing happiness, Claudia felt humbled, and bowed before the calm, grave, superior nature which had once been united in such proud and holy bonds to her own.

But it was but for a moment.

Leonardo hastily advanced, and half angrily drew her towards him, and led her to the side of the bed, at which they both knelt, while the pale invalid raised herself with a last exertion of strength, and stretched out her hands towards them.

"Bless you, my children," she said.

"Claudia, my darling, my only earthly tie, my precious child, may your life be more happy, your conduct more free from reproach, than your unhappy, erring mother's.

"May God keep her from the pride, and jealousy, and imprudence that caused her ruin.

"The blessing of your only remaining parent be on your head, my daughter, and on the husband of your choice."

The stranger had drawn back for a moment, and looked on and listened unnoticed, for Mr. Ashley's whole senses seemed occupied with the dying sufferer.

A quick, sudden exclamation escaped him, as he first caught the accents of her feeble voice; he advanced a step forward, and gazed, like one petrified and transfixed on the pale, wan face before him.

And thus the rapid but singular movements of the stranger were for the time unnoticed.

He had quickly withdrawn to a spot behind the curtain of the bed, and the next moment his head appeared from its concealment with its iron-grey hair wondrously changed to black, as raven and glossy in hue as that of Leonardo himself, while there was a similar transformation of the thick moustache that had formerly overhung the well-cut mouth.

The slouching overcoat, too, had been thrown aside, and the figure that had been thus made to look a stooping, round, middle-aged form, had now the erect and well-proportioned air of a man little past middle age.

At least twenty years had been taken from his appearance, and a completely different aspect given to the whole man.

But even this extraordinary change could hardly account for the effect his appearance produced on at least two of the party.

The invalid gave a faint, gasping scream, while the usually stern and composed features of Sidney Ashley were actually convulsed with astonishment.

"Filippo!" he exclaimed, "has the grave really given up its dead, or am I the victim of a cruel jest?"

"Neither, Sidney Ashley," replied the man.

"If you are the victim of aught but your own besotted folly, it is on the sins of your forefathers that the burden must be laid.

"It is Filippo Strozzi that stands before you, to witness the consummation of a purpose of a life, the avenging of a mother's wrongs—a mother's murder.

"Edith," he said, turning to the pale and trembling invalid, "your own lips have proved that I misjudged you; and if my pardon, my acquittal will smoothe your death-bed, I freely give it.

"If you have erred, you have not been false to me, and I did you wrong."

He stooped down, with a momentary touch of tenderness in his look and tone, and pressed his lips to hers, for an instant.

Then he turned to the wondering petrified young pair, who had just been united in the bond of holy wedlock, and again that mobile face assumed a tender, gentle expression that totally changed its whole aspect.

"Claudia, my child, Leonardo, my nephew—my new son—a father's blessing rests on your union," he said.

The young bride looked bewildered and confused in the speaker's face.

Leonardo was about to speak, but a wave of the unknown's hand stopped him.

"One moment," said he, "and you shall know all."

Turning to the observant, motionless Sidney Ashley, who stood with folded arms and fixed features, calmly attentive to all that passed, he spoke sternly and with a change of expression as sudden and extraordinary as the transformation that had just taken place.

"Sidney Ashley," said he, "for long years I have endured solitude, obscurity, loss of wife and child, of station, of country—of all that makes life happy, nay, endurable—to accomplish the purpose which has just been consummated.

"You stand there, in your turn, bereft of fortune, of a former and newer love, of station, of all the means of happiness; and all that remains for my full revenge, is, that you should know and feel that it is my work.

"Edith Vere, speak for yourself; tell this descendant of a proud and cruel race that it was from me that you first learned what to expect from his tender mercies, and to acknowledge what true love is; that had it not been for me, you might have submitted to your fate, and graced his home by your beauty and your noble intellect.

"Tell him that had it not been for me, the full proofs of his usurpation of my property would never have been forthcoming, and that it is to me you owe the restoration of your child to your arms.

"And you, Leonardo Strozzi, add your testimony to mine—that it was my agency that first guided you to that lovely child, who was destined to be sacrificed to his selfish vanity, and at last worked out the accomplishment of your wishes, your love. My task is done.

"My only child, the heiress of my long-descended estates, is wedded to the heir of the titles of an ancient name; my honor is cleared of the stain that I believed had been cast on it by a wife's weakness; and you, the heir of the sins, the pride, the hardness of an unblessed line, are bereft of all that has so long compensated for the one great trial of your life. Edith——"

He was turning to the dying woman before him, when a sudden movement of the young girl, who had been hitherto clinging to her new husband's arm, arrested him.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Scientific and Useful.

YEAST.—Good yeast can be kept in excellent condition if it is twice well washed with ice-cold hard spring water and then dried and well-pressed. This mass is afterward to be well mixed with malt dust and stored in closed jars in ice cellars.

RUBBER STOPPERS.—To preserve caoutchouc stoppers and tubing they should be kept in a closed jar, in which a vessel containing petroleum is placed. Caoutchouc stoppers which have become hard may be softened by exposure to the vapor of carbon bisulphide.

SILK WORMS.—An Italian has discovered that the hatching of silk worm eggs may be hastened by friction. The process consists essentially in brushing the eggs vigorously for ten or twelve minutes with a moderately hard brush, made preferably of coarse grass. In less than fifteen days the eggs thus treated will hatch out, with a product as healthy as that obtained in the usual way.

NEW LIGHT.—A new electric light has appeared in Paris, which is called "Sunlight" on account of its mellow lustre. The light is formed by inserting two carbons in holes bored into a block of marble in such a manner that the points of the carbons are separated by a thin partition of the marble. An electric current is passed through the carbons, and in traversing the shell of marble causes it to become white hot, emitting a most agreeable light.

CURE FOR CORNS.—A correspondent of the *Scientific American* is authority for the following cure for corns: Take one-fourth cup strong vinegar, crumb finely into it some bread; let stand half an hour, or until it softens into a good poultice; then apply on retiring at night. In the morning the soreness will be gone and the corn can be picked out. If the corn is a very obstinate one it may require two or more applications to effect a cure.

Farm and Garden.

TREES.—Among the objections to fall-planted trees are that they are frequently put in loosely, while many of the roots do not come in contact with the soil. Hence, to their great injury, the roots do not heal, but dry up. It should be remembered that it is the drying up of the stems by cold, frosty winds, and not so much low temperature, that injures fall-planted trees.

OLD STUMPS.—By all odds the cheapest and best way to eradicate common hard wood stumps, says the *Practical Farmer*, is to work the ground with a shovel plow, sow buckwheat or plant corn until seeded to timothy, orchard grass and clover, and pasture until the stumps so far decay that they can be pulled out by hitching a chain around the top when the ground is wet in the winter or spring.

MUCK.—Dried muck from the swamps is an exceedingly useful material for the gardener. In many sections of this country it can be obtained at little more than the cost of cutting, drying, and carting it. No gardener ever has too much of it. It has many excellent properties. It will make heavy soil light. It will make dry soil moist. It make cold soil warm. It is an excellent absorbent of water and gases. It is itself a manure, and can be used to great advantage in our stables, cow-houses and pig-pens, as well as for mixing with manure in our compost heaps.

POULTRY.—In winter rations for poultry nothing is better and nothing is so cheap as good Indian corn, and one meal a day may safely be of this grain, either ground or whole. Grinding is of less consequence for poultry than for the larger animals, as every bird carries a complete mill for this purpose, and puts in a new run of stones as often as it can get to the ground. A variety of grain is always acceptable; wheat screenings, buckwheat, oats, and rye, the last rather sparingly. Cooked food is highly relished—potatoes or turnips, boiled and mashed with Indian meal, scalded and fed warm, especially on frosty mornings. Fowls are very fond of vegetables, eaten raw, and if sugar-beets or mangels or turnips are put within reach, they will help themselves. For an appetizer, nothing is better than cabbage or the tops of turnips.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-SECOND YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 16, 1882.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

(Lock Box 5.) **720 Sansom St., Phila., Pa.**

THE TRUE GENTLEMAN.

It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. He carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast; all clashing of opinion, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, and merciful toward the absurd; he guards against unseasonable allusions or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He never speaks of himself except when compelled; never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for any slander or gossip, he is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best.

If he engages in controversy of any kind his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds, who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear headed to be unjust, he is simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. He throws himself into the mind of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes he knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits.

He respects piety and devotion, he supports institutions venerable, beautiful, and useful, to which he does not assent; he honors the ministers of religion, and it contents him to decline its mysteries without denouncing them. He is a friend of religious toleration and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness of feeling which is the attendant on civilization.

SANCTUM CHAT.

EDISON is now building a 40 ton electric locomotive designed to haul an ordinary train of cars at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and which is intended to put into actual operation in England. The engine will be of 250 horse power. The current is taken from the rails and transferred to the conductors leading to the motor.

—

IN Germany women and girls are coming to be employed in trades and manufactories in large numbers. The census of 1881 shows that 345,753 females between the ages of twelve and twenty seven were engaged in the 98,554 manufactories, which also give employment to 1,636,009 men. There was no German manufactory where female workers were not employed.

—

A REACTIONARY movement would seem to have begun in England in the matter of wearing birds. We read in a London paper of a garden party at which a young lady was boycotted for wearing on her hat two "sweet little gray doves," which she boasted, some one had shot especially for her. The other girls scarcely spoke to her, and made the men promise not to dance with her. She was only reinstated into general favor when she removed her hat, confessing that she had never thought of the cruelty to the birds.

—

BABIES, says a Western journal, now have a market value; and regular quotations are given just the same as though though they were little pigs or spring lambs. The little tootsey-wootsey, the lisping toddler, the pert 4-year-old, the sharp witted young miss of 7, the clattering schoolboy of 11, are all rated as worth so much in dollars and cents. Under the special market formed for the parents' benefit, the prices, while not remarkably high, should be of benefit to those of limited means, who losing a little one would find the expense of burial a heavy weight on a light pocketbook. Here are the values fixed by the baby insurance companies. A child less than one year old is worth $14, between one and two years, $19, two to three years, $28, four years, $31; five years, $35; six years, $40; seven years, $50, eight years, $60; nine years, $70; ten years, $90; eleven years, $123. The parents pay five cents a week for the insurance of their child.

—

SOME learned gentlemen undertook a while ago to maintain that Moses was a myth, and pointed for proof to the fact that none of the ancient Hebrews was called Moses. The gentlemen forget that no Hebrew was called Abraham down to the second Christian century. So it appears that the Jews down to a very late period would not assume the name of Moses, Abraham, or even Isaac, on account of the veneration they felt for the bearers of those names.

—

AT a funeral in Richmond, Va., recently, the minister made a special prayer for the undertaker. The novelty of the petition startled the audience and brought a smile even to the deeply-saddened face of the undertaker. The appropriateness of such a special petition at a funeral may well be doubted, but, at the same time, it must be felt that the life of an undertaker is not favorable to piety. He is brought almost constantly into the presence of death, but his connection with it is purely a commercial transaction. He is much more likely to regard the event in the light of a trade than to draw lessons of warning from it.

—

A MOUSTACHE war, says a London journal, is now waging in the great city of Berlin. For some inexplicable reason the hotel keepers of that city took it into their heads to require their waiters to have shaven upper lips. No rebellion followed, and then the order was extended to house-servants. Still no rebellion. Emboldened by success in these two orders, mine host had the temerity to order the cooks to dispense with their moustaches. That was going too far. The sleeping lion was aroused. At last accounts the momentous question at issue between landlords and cooks was undetermined, with some prospect of a retirement of all male kings of the kitchen in favor of those who would be sure to comply with the regulation, notwithstanding any and all hirsute predilections.

—

THE newest idea in note paper that fashionable stationers are showing—ragged edge paper—bears in water line the words, "Ye ancient Roman Writing-paper," and the head of a Roman soldier in armor, under which is the superscription, "B. C. L. V." Fashion has decreed another change in note paper, which is perforated and gummed, about the edge, and when the note is written,—on one side, it is folded and sealed and the directions written, thus doing away with the envelope. This paper in these cases is the size of a note sheet unfolded, one side of which is furnished with a gummed envelope flap. Doubtless this new agony will bring into fashion seals and sealing wax.

—

THE congregation of a fashionable New York church is just at present energetically discussing the question of "ought we to visit her?" a large majority of the members, it is reported, inclining to the negative. The "her" in this case is the pastor's mother, of irreproachable moral character and unobtrusive manners. Although no fault can be found with her manners or her morals she has in the past been guilty of that which determines society or Christians to withhold from her the ordinary courtesies of social life. Her offence is that, in former days, in order to support herself and a family of children, she pursued the calling of a washerwoman, and a people which worships a son of a carpenter refuses to extend social recognition to a worthy woman, who, by the faithful performance of lowly duties, has aided her son to attain his present honorable position.

—

BY an official decree just issued, no person will hereafter be able to purchase dynamite in France without first submitting to the Prefect of the Department in which the depot is situated a declaration stating his name, residence and occupation, the quantity he desires to purchase, the use he proposes to make of it, as well as the date when and place where he means to keep it till using it, and the mode by which it will be transported to the spot where it will be deposited. On authorization being accorded a ticket will be given to the intending purchaser, which will be returned by the seller, to the Prefect within twenty-four hours after delivery. Special authorization will be required to keep the dynamite in deposit longer than a week. Within a week after the reception of the dynamite, the person using it must send to the Prefect a report stating how, when and where such use was made. The punishments for disobeying these orders, under a law passed in 1875, on which this decree is based, are from one month's to one year's imprisonment, and from $20 to $2,000 fine.

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THE following is an English opinion of American newspapers: "Although newspapers are so numerous, and many of them so able, there is probably no country with Western institutions where newspapers are so little influential. One might travel all over the Eastern States without finding a single individual who regards a statement in type with that very stupid simplicity so common in this country. Belief in the veracity of a newspaper is as little known as respect for the patriotism and wisdom of the public man. The American is much less of a reader of books than is generally supposed. He wants his newspaper to bring him the intelligence of the day, the state of the markets, and so forth. The political article helps him to judge how certain political combinations are working. If the paper adds a social essay, or a scandalous family history, or a column of verse, these contributions supply him some mental entertainment. He may note the scandal, but he never thinks of believing it because he has seen it in print."

—

A NEW YORK journal remarks that if the mere act of whistling can help and cheer a man so much, why should it be denied to a woman? If whistling will drive away the blues, and be company for a lonesome person, surely women have much more need of its services than their brothers, for to them come many more such occasions than to men. There are many who have not the gift of song; why should they not whistle as they rock the cradle or perform their household duties, or accompany themselves on the piano? But there is a physical or hygienic advantage in whistling which should excuse it against all the canons of propriety or "good form." It is often remarked that the average girl is so narrow chested, and in that respect compares so unfavorably with her brother. May this not be due in some measure to the habit of whistling, which every boy acquires as soon as he arrives at the dignity of pants, but which girls seldom do? Let any one try for five minutes the inhaling or exhaling of the breath as it occurs in the act of whistling, and the effect on the lungs and chest cannot fail to be noticed. A daily practice of this kind would be of more benefit than all the patent inspirators and chest expanders in the market.

—

OBSERVING Americans note a revival of rings, bracelets and lavish colors in Continental society. Young men at the theatres are conspicuous when they stand, as is the custom on the Continent, with their opera-glasses levelled at the house, with bracelets on their wrists, jewels on their hands with the slender golden chain, which became the fashion among ladies not long ago. In the revived frescoes of Pompeii the same thing may be seen. Young Romans fastened the sleeves of their togas with gems, and covered their bare arms from the wrist to the elbows with fillets of gold and jewels. The craving ambition of every man under a monarchy is for a decoration. A meeting of Parliament is a spectacle of such personal bedizenment as the wildest caricature could not surpass. So great a mind as Disraeli's could not be weaned from the craving for adornment. As a youth he was plastered with jewelry in the House, as an earl he was covered with the most whimsical insignia of his order in the Peers. A session of any one of the great orders of the Bath, the Thistle, the Garter, the Golden Fleece, St. George, the Black Eagle, or the hundred score different companies invented by sovereigns to stimulate the ardor and flatter the vanity of the noble and aspiring, presents more theatric gorgeousness than an Oriental pageant.

"HOME FROM WORK."

FROM THE RUSSIAN.

Good evening, wife! Good evening, little ones!
Bring out the liquor! Oh! what a frost has set in!
You have, then, forgotten how you drained the last bottle quite,
When the tithe-collector called to see us.—Well, no great trouble!

A poor sinner can warm himself even if he has no spirit:
But tell me, you looked to the horse, wife, well,
For in the spring the bonnie beast was nigh starved
When the hay began to fail.

Eh, I am dead with fatigue. * * * Well, you have seen to the horse?
So, now, give me something warm to eat.
I have not been able, darling, to heat the stove today.
For, you know, the wood has run out.

Well, a poor sinner can warm himself without soup.
But you have given the horse a good feed of oats,
For it was he alone that helped us the summer through,
And the brave beast worked hard in our four fields.

And now, 'tis hard for us to drag the timber home.
The roads are quite cut up. * * * How, is there no morsel of bread?
It is all finished, darling. I've sent to neighbors to ask for some,
And they have promised to let me have a little by the dawn.

Well, and a poor sinner can sleep even if he has no bread:
But, wife, lay down some straw for the horse:
Why, this very winter our bonnie beast has drawn
More than three hundred timber-rafts.

Friends Only.

BY FLORENCE MEURER.

THE theory of love in a cottage is somewhat exhausted in these later days, my dear Helen.

"Still, if you so infinitely prefer the fostering of some such romantic idea to accepting a man young, handsome, and with a rent roll of ten thousand a year, I only beg you to remember, when too late to retrieve the irretrievable, that you have naught to blame but your own wilful obstinacy."

And Mrs. Dunham, having delivered herself of the above address, accompanied it by a long and profound sigh.

What impression the profound wisdom of her remarks had made was difficult to glean, since only the back of her listener (a very straight and graceful back, be it observed) was visible.

She was standing beside the window, looking down into the street below.

A half-shrug of the pretty shoulders indicated that she had heard, at least.

Mrs. Dunham could not suppress her impatience.

"You are incorrigible, Helen," she continued.

"Do let me know how you intend to receive Arthur Rugby, and why you are so unwilling to accede to your uncle's wishes?"

The young girl turned now, revealing a face of more than usual loveliness; but there was a scarlet flush upon her cheek, and an ominous light in her eyes, as she at last replied—

"I am not a piece of merchandise," she said, "to be bought or sold, simply because an old man has taken it into his head that certain family interests are to be benefitted thereby.

"Doubtless this plan is as repulsive to Arthur Rugby as to myself.

"He is not in absolute need of money.

"If he is a man, he would rather work for a woman whom he loved than live with one forced upon his heart."

"Forced, Helen?

"You use such strong expressions, my dear.

"Remember that you and your cousin have not met since you were little children.

"What is to prevent you falling in love with each other?

"At least, child, look your prettiest tonight, and receive him in your own charming way, and I will answer for the result as far as he is concerned.

"It is arranged that he is to take you in to dinner."

"With the understanding that it is the first of many dinners where we are to be thrown upon each other's society, a sort of experiment as to the mutual entertainment of which each is capable.

"Really, aunty, I don't think the condition will be inspiring."

And with a fascinating little air of disdain the young girl swept from the room.

"He shall see that I am not a party to this conspiracy at any rate," she thought to herself, as a slight stir in the corridor outside her door, a few hours later, betokened the new arrival.

"If I fascinate him," and she laughed mirthfully, "it will be through no wish of mine."

Meantime a young and handsome man, making his toilet for dinner, allowed his thoughts to be somewhat similarly occupied.

"Ten thousand a year, Uncle Reuben, and a wife of your choosing, or three thousand and the charms of bachelorhood, or at least a free choice.

"Really, I think the latter prospect to be more enticing.

"I hope the girl does not entertain any foolish ideas.

"It would make it embarrassing.

"I needn't have feared," he added, mentally, some sixty minutes after the above soliloquy, the formal introduction having been gone through with, and the third course in order at the dinner table.

"She has not an idea upon any subject.

"Beyond a few remarks on the weather, and the hope that I will find the shooting good, she has not honored me.

"Evidently a school-girl, unaccustomed to society.

"Oh, no, Uncle Reuben, a pretty face is not all I desire in a wife."

Nor as the dinner progressed, did he find reason to change his mind.

Spite of the warning glances sent by Mrs. Dunham across the table to her niece, there was no relaxing of the stiff politeness, so different from the usual gracious demeanor which made her so general a favorite.

Thus a week wore away, until the last day appointed for Mr. Rugby's visit had arrived.

Quite by accident, Helen, fancying he already had started for the day's shooting, entered the library, to find him seated there busy writing a letter.

She would have withdrawn, but that, at the rustling of her dress, he raised his head and instantly sprang to his feet.

"Do not let me disturb you, I beg. I came in search of a book.

"How happens it you are not shooting today?"

"I was writing to Uncle Reuben," he said; and then a wave of blood mounted to his face.

He remembered that he had just written the words which told him that the fulfilment of his pet ambition was impossible.

Helen was not slow to detect his embarrassment, and divined its cause.

For the first time the stiffness which characterized her fled.

She held out her hand with bewitching frankness, and a little, light laugh.

"Is there any reason we shouldn't be friends, Cousin Arthur," she said, "because they wished to force us into being lovers against our will?"

"None in the world," he answered, catching her fingers in his own strong, warm grasp.

"It was an absurd idea, was it not?

"But now that we have broken the ice regarding it, we can afford to treat it as the absurd joke it in reality is.

"But when you do select the fortunate man, cousin mine, let me know, and I promise to officiate as best man on the occasion."

"I will certainly ask you, if you do not first set me the example," she replied.

And, snatching her hand from his detaining grasp she ran out of the room.

"By Jove! as a friend she's not so bad.

"It was only this idea of matrimony which made her insupportable," thought the young man, returning to his writing.

But somehow the letter to Uncle Reuben dragged; the outdoor atmosphere seemed to invite him to its enjoyment.

So, thrusting away the unfinished page, he sallied forth, with lighter heart than he had known in many days, now that the burden of future possibilities had been lifted.

To-morrow he would be amid new scenes, but at least he could remember Helen, not as an awkward *debutante*, forced upon his liking, but a girl frank enough to break down the barriers which hitherto had made even friendship between them impossible.

"To-morrow?

How little one knows of the to-morrow.

Tossing on his bed in feverish, delirious pain, Arthur Rugby noted not time, nor reckoned when that morrow to which he had looked forward became to-day.

He had been in the midst of the enjoyment of his day's shooting, when the barrel of the gun he carried burst, seriously wounding his arm and shoulder.

In the dusk of evening he had been borne back, senseless and bleeding, to spend long weary days and wearier nights of pain and wakeful restlessness.

How glad Helen was that all possible misconstruction to any act of kindness shown him had been done away with!

They so fully understood each other now, so entirely comprehended the mutual aversion with which they regarded the future folly others had wished them to perpetrate, that she might take her place in the sick-room without one moment's check upon her heart's impulse.

Therefore, it was she who adjusted the light so that it might never be too strong; it was her hands which knew best how to arrange and cool the heated pillows beneath his aching head.

It was her voice which whiled away the hours of convalescence, reading to him the books he chose.

It was her step which never jarred as it glided to and fro across his chamber.

It was her coming he grew to watch for, her going he learned to miss, until the slow weeks glided by, bringing with them the returning health and strength which, for the first time in his young life, had been so suddenly stricken from him.

But, although now able to leave the house where so long he had been an enforced guest, he still lingered.

A full month had elapsed since his accident, when, one evening, sitting in the library, his unfinished letter to his Uncle Reuben met his eye.

He took it up and read it all.

Full well he remembered the sentiment of almost aversion which had filled his breast as he perused those lines.

To what had it given place to-day?

Never before had he asked himself the question.

It pressed upon him with overwhelming force.

Had he been blind, that, when he might have reached out his hand for this most priceless gift, he wilfully thrust it on one side?

How bare, how empty, how desolate his future life looked, and all because——

But just here his reverie was cut short.

The door opened, and the blonde head of his cousin was thrust inquiringly in.

"Is aunty here?" she asked.

"No," he answered; "but come in.

"I have something to show you," and he held up the letter he had penned.

"I wrote this the day that I was hurt.

"Read it."

Wonderingly she took it from him.

The room was half in shadow; but, as she gleaned its meaning, the semi-darkness could not quite conceal the painful flush which rose to the lovely face, and the hurt, amazed look which grew in the dark eyes.

His heart gave a great throb of pain, as through its suffering it realized its own existence; but his anguished cry was stifled, and only a scornful anger was in her tone as at last she spoke.

"Did you so entirely fail to comprehend me, and the nature of the bond between us, that you find it necessary to remind me of it thus?" she questioned.

"You wrong yourself," he answered.

"Can you not understand a man's committing so great a folly that he feels he must make confession of it?

"Helen, you hold my confession in your hands.

"Oh, tell me, is there for me no absolution?

"Can you not forgive my blind arrogance—my self-conceited suicide of my own happiness.

"Helen, you took the smart from my wounds as no one else could do.

"Will you not likewise take the smart from my heart—the heart that has learned to know that you are its sole sovereign?

"They have taught me the beauty of a true womanhood.

"I cannot hope to gain my pearl of great price by this sudden wooing; but in time, Helen, may I not hope to teach you the lesson which came to me untaught, unsought?"

The darkness had fallen now, and the lovely color in her face was hidden even from his hungry view; but the letter to Uncle Reuben had fluttered to the ground.

"Answer me, Helen!" he said, impatient in his great longing.

"Will you never love me?"

"Never?" she whispered. "Ah, for ever!" and hid her burning cheeks upon his heart.

The next mail took to Uncle Reuben a joint letter, and though he never received the old one, I think he never regretted its loss; though, chuckling over the glad news his old eyes read, he little knew how Cupid had to resort to gunpowder instead of arrows to gain his forced entrance into two stubborn hearts!

Beginning and End.

BY H. C.

I WAS sent to Dallas, Texas, in June, 1880, to report the proceedings of the trial of some noted Texas cattle thieves and put up at the "St. George."

The trial had closed on the 17th and I had been writing up from my shorthand notes after supper until every one had retired, as I thought, and I was very much wearied.

Leaving my writing in my room, I lit a cigar and strolled out on the balcony in my slippered feet.

As I walked toward the east end of the balcony my attention was attracted by the low but earnest tones of a woman's voice—

"No, no, my dear friend—my dearly beloved, more than friend, I cannot consent; I have no positive knowledge that he is dead."

"But, Ada, it has been two years since you read that he was shot in attempting to rob a stage in company with Ham White," said a man's voice, in pleading tones.

"Yes, Edwin, I know," was the reply, "but there is such a dread in my heart that he is not dead; and, oh! if I should marry and he still——"

I could hear her sigh and know she shuddered.

"Why, Ada, since you have such a horror of his very name and memory, do you not procure a divorce?

"I will see that you procure one to-mor——"

"No, not that—not that!

"His curse has followed me—it would fall on me then. I know it would," and she sobbed dreadfully.

"My darling, suffering loved one, put away your foolish fancies and let us be happy.

"You haven't told me the story of yourself and this man, Henry Hardwick, who was your husband, and whom you seem to fear though he is dead."

"Henry Hardwick," I said to myself.

"Let me see; that name sounds familiar.

"Ah, I have it!

"He is the one who committed such a bold forgery in San Antonio about two years ago."

I was interested now, sure enough.

"Well, she began, "in June, 1878—to-morrow two years—I was married to Henry Hardwick.

"That night he was arrested for burglary and forgery.

"Henry escaped that night, and father died next day, of heart disease, the doctors say.

"And it was I gave it to him."

And I heard such heart-wrung sobbing as I never hope to hear again.

I started to move, when Edwin, as I had heard her call him, said, in a voice full of sympathy and love—

"Ada, my love, you have suffered as few suffer in this life; but come, say you will let me make to-morrow our wedding day.

"You have never seen him since, and you saw his death announced."

"Have never seen him?

"Yes, once.

"He came to me after mother and I had moved from San Antonio to Dallas.

"He came to tell me that if I ever married he would curse me and mine.

"He meant it.

"I know he did, and I fear him, unless I could see his face and know he was dead.

"And yet, God knows I do not wish him dead, with his life to answer for."

She was calm then, and I left, as her friend and lover had got her to promise that if she did not hear from her lawless husband in six months she would marry him.

I was in no mood to write any more on horse and cattle-thief trials, so I went to bed pondering over what I had heard, and wondering who the parties were besides Ada and Edwin.

The next morning I was startled to read in the *Morning Call* that a man had been shot while trying to enter a room of a lady in the St. George hotel to burglarize, and was at Mr. H——'s undertaking establishment for recognition; that, on being shot, the thief had fallen from the second story to the ground, and was mangled about the face as to be unrecognizable, unless by some one who had been very intimately acquainted with him.

Drawn by this strange notice, that undertaker's house was crowded all day with the curious and the earnest seekers.

Fathers, who knew their boys were wild, would come in with compressed lips, take a look, and go away with a look of joyful disappointment.

Mothers, who had doubtless been praying for sons known to be disreputable, would come in pale and trembling, see a face they had never seen before, drop a tear, and leave in haste.

About three o'clock in the afternoon I went down to the undertaker's and seated myself behind a stack of coffins, with a book in my hand, so that I could appear to be reading if discovered.

After waiting about two hours a lady entered, deeply veiled.

She gave one glance at the man's marred, pale features, and gasped and reeled.

She gazed a few moments, then quickly opened the clenched hand and clutched a small piece of crumpled paper which had hitherto escaped observation.

"Great Heaven, it is, at last! Oh, what an end is this! And I would have been ——"

I sprang forward and caught her in my arms as she was falling.

She quickly recovered, still holding that thin crumpled bit of paper.

"Madam," I asked, "do you know this unfortunate man?"

"Alas, sir, I do," was her answer.

"Who is he?"

"He goes by the name of Orville Blaine, and is known as one of the most desperate men in all North Western Texas," she answered, apparently with a great effort.

"If he a relative of yours—if you will pardon me?

"I have none but friendly motives in asking," I said, as we drove back to the hotel, she being too much overcome to walk.

"Oh, sir, now that he is dead I need not hesitate.

"He was my husband!"

We were at the hotel then, and she went to her room, leaving me wondering at having found the wives of two desperadoes in the same hotel.

At seven o'clock that night I received a note, which ran—

"EXPRESS CORRESPONDENT, June 18th, '80.

"DEAR SIR,—

"Will you please come in the ladies parlor at 8.30 this P. M.

"Respectfully,

"EDWIN ELDERS."

I immediately thought of the Edwin I had eavesdropped the night before, and did not feel very comfortable.

I went, however.

To my astonishment, I found my strange female acquaintance of the undertaker's room there, also a tall, handsome-refined-looking young man, about twenty-three, and the judge who had been trying, and who had that day sentenced the cattle-thieves.

"We have called you in, sir," said Mr. Elders, who had introduced himself, as he found I was acquainted with Judge Abiridge, "to let you see the end of what you saw begin to-day.

"But, excuse me, this is Mrs. (hesitating) Blaine.

"You saw the last of the man she once called husband.

"I now have the happiness to make her my wife on the second anniversary of her first wedding."

He never noticed the look and start of surprise I could not keep down, but she did, and I could see that she wondered.

I was mystified more and more when I pondered on the circumstances of the two cases being identical, even to the wedding anniversary.

After the judge had "tied the knot," and

we had drank to the health, prosperity, and happiness of the new couple, I turned to go.

As I picked up my hat off the piano, I noticed a small bit of crumpled paper lying there.

I picked it up and read—

"I heard you to-night. My curse will fall on you. You shall never marry. To-morrow morning will find you where there are no marriages."

It was not signed; but she knew and I knew she had been "divorced by a bullet."

Her husband had been in the act of entering her room to murder her, when he had been shot.

Our Brother.

BY FLORENCE MEURER.

REMEMBER, Edna, it is a sacred charge, my child.

"You must be mother and sister both to my dear boy."

They were sacred, solemn words, the more so that she who uttered them was dying.

The girl to whom they were addressed, herself scarcely more than a child, bent and kissed the lips already growing cold, but about them, as she did so, crept a smile.

Something in the silent, wordless touch assured the mother-heart that the burden had been already lifted upon these young shoulders.

Ere the day dawned a yet heavier one was laid there, the burden of orphanage.

Her father had died when Rodney was an infant.

Now they were alone in the world.

She was but six years her brother's senior, this tall, slender girl of seventeen.

How could she hope to guide him, a strong, self-willed boy, always in the right way?

She had need of all her courage, all her bravery, when, three years later, she waited in vain for Rodney's home-coming, until at last, white and sick with anxiety, they brought to her a hurriedly scrawled note, telling her that Rodney had gone to sea.

"I am tired of home," he wrote.

"I am going to make a man of myself."

"Oh, in what had she failed?" she asked herself.

If her mother had lived surely this would not have happened, though for two years Rodney had threatened it.

Desolate indeed was the little home now.

Her income, though small, was sufficient for her needs.

During the years that followed letters came to her now and then from distant ports—letters that caused her heart to grow sadder, heavier, as they marked his growth into dissipation and lawlessness.

Then they ceased altogether.

Her boy would be eighteen now, did he live.

It was a strange time for romance to creep into her life.

Perhaps it took the stronger hold for that; yet it was not strange that she should learn to love Robert Dare.

He was a man of the world, rich and handsome, cultivated and courteous.

For a time she refused to admit this wonderful happiness into her hungering, yearning heart.

It almost seemed as though in some way she was forgetting her promise to the dead.

She was happy and secure, her brother perhaps in want—perhaps in misery and despair.

But youth and hope cried out against this self-inflicted torture, and love gained the victory.

"I want you, darling," pleaded Robert Dare.

"For nearly forty years I have lived my life alone; for ten, until meeting you, I have had no trust in woman.

"Ten years ago I was engaged to one I thought as pure and true as you.

"Almost at the altar, I found that she loved another, and was marrying me but for my gold.

"Thank Heaven, it was not too late for me to draw back!

"Thank Heaven life is once more full of sweetness to me."

Thus he gained her promise that in the spring she would become his wife.

It was winter then, and one evening, after her lover had left her, and she sat before the fire, brooding over her happiness, there came a sudden, quick peal at the bell.

She herself rose and opened the door, but started back, as a shivering, half-clad man burst abruptly in upon her.

She uttered a slight scream, when he turned and laughed.

"Is that your welcome?" he said,

"Well, I don't wonder you didn't know me: but it's Rodney all the same."

Rodney?

One instant she hesitated, then she sprang forward and caught him, sobbing in her arms.

She drew him into the fire and the light, that she might look at him through her fast-falling tears.

There were traces of dissipation on the young face, a look of premature age, and lines of hardness—almost of wickedness—about the mouth.

"Who was the fellow who just went away?" he asked.

"I've been waiting two hours for him to go.

"He came in just as I was about to come."

"He is a gentleman to whom I am engaged, Rodney."

"Ho-ho!

"So that is the tide of affairs.

"Has he money?

"I hope so.

"I might find a rich brother-in-law convenient."

"Oh, Rodney, hush!" entreated Edna.

Again he laughed coarsely.

"Money's not such a bad thing," he said.

"Which reminds me, by-the-way, I'm in need of some to-night—two hundred dollars, Edna—and I must have it, too.

"It's money that I owe."

"Two hundred dollars, Rodney?

"Yes, dear.

"There are two thousand lying to your credit in the bank.

"It's your own, Rodney.

"It's what you would have had had you been at home.

"There are four hundred dollars besides, that I have saved from my expenses.

"Together, Rodney, it might quite set you up in business."

"No business for me," answered Rodney.

"But it's a snug windfall for all that, and glad enough I am to get it.

"Here, give me the cheque for the amount.

"I will draw what I need, and leave the rest.

"And I say, Edna, the less you say about my return yet awhile the better."

"But surely you will let me tell Robert that I have seen you?"

"Surely I will do nothing of the kind," he said.

"Promise me that you will not!

"Very well, then.

"But, Rodney, it will not be long before you acknowledge yourself?"

"Too soon perhaps, my dear."

And, with a light kiss upon her cheek, and her cheque safely stowed away in his pocket, he left her.

She sank, stunned and bewildered, into the chair into which she had risen to admit him.

"What is the matter, Edna?" asked Dare, twenty-four hours later.

"What is troubling you, darling?

"Do you think I cannot read in your face that something has gone wrong?"

A hurt look crept into his eyes as she evaded his question.

It was the first shadow of deceit which had fallen between them.

A week wore on.

Each day a dull presentiment grew upon her—each day her lover's gaze rested more keenly on her face.

At the end of a fortnight, the blow fell.

Robert had bade her good night, as before, when some one tapped upon the window with a cane.

She felt that it was Rodney, and hastened to admit him.

He was well-dressed now, but his face was deathly pale, and his eyes were bright with excitement.

"I have lost my money," he hurriedly began.

"I staked it at play, thinking to double it.

"I boasted of having come into a fortune, and so, when I lost, they trusted me.

"I am in debt one thousand dollars.

"You must raise it for me, Edna."

"I can't, Rodney!" she cried, wringing her hand; "not if I give up all I have in the world!

"You know the principal of our little fortune is fixed so that we cannot touch it.

"Ask them for time, Rodney.

"I will work for you—with you—to pay this debt, if they will but give us time."

"You reason like a woman," he said bitterly.

"I tell you I must have it, and at once.

"Go to your lover.

"Ask him for it for yourself. He will give it to you."

"I would rather die first!" she replied hotly.

"I thought so," he sneered.

"Do you think that mother would rather have died first?"

"No, no!" she answered again.

"You are right, I am wrong.

"I will think it over.

"I will try to see my way clear for the right."

"You'll have to," he said.

"I took the law into my own hands.

"I lied just now now when I said they trusted me.

"Oh, I've not been idle!

"I found out who your lover was.

"I got a piece of his writing.

"I wrote it on the back of a cheque.

"There, don't faint.

"As Heaven is my judge, I thought I was sure to win!

"The cheque will be presented before them to-morrow.

"Edna, save me!

"Say to him that you did it.

"Do not betray me!

"You he will forgive.

"You are not, you cannot be, sure that he will give me up!

"He does not dream that I am in existence.

"You can save me if you will.

"Decide.

"Will you send me to prison, or will you confess your guilt to your future husband?"

"My future husband!"

Her white lips gasped the words.

No!

That dream was over.

She must make him believe her the falsest, the vilest of women.

"Edna, forgive me!" the boy pleaded, with some softening, as he saw the white look of agony upon her face.

"I was so sure, or I would not have done it!

"Help me this time, and I swear to be a better man."

"I will do it," she said, but in a voice so strange he started.

"You must go now. In a month you may return."

She was conscious that he kissed and left her, then for hours she knew nothing.

Before noon next day Robert Dare, with an expression in his eyes she had never seen there before, entered her little sitting-room.

"Edna," he began, "last night I had forgotten something, and was about returning, when I saw a man tap on this window with his cane.

"Instantly you admitted him.

"As your future husband, I have some right to ask you who it is that thus visits you."

"I cannot answer you," she replied. "Robert—Mr. Dare—I——"

But the trembling sentence had not passed her lips, ere a messenger demanding to see Mr. Dare was announced.

He handed him a slip of paper from the bank.

"Pardon my following you, sir, but your clerk thought I might find you here, and the bank is most anxious to know if this is your signature."

Before he could frame his denial, Edna caught the paper in her trembling hand and hastily scanned it.

"Yes," she replied.

"It is the cheque you drew for me.

"You may not remember, but it is all right.

"I will recall it to your memory.

His quick glance saw that she wished it so.

"Tell the bank to hold it for an hour," he said.

"I will let them know positively before closing time."

The man withdrew.

"Edna!"

His voice rang out her name with startling sternness.

"Yes," she said, but all unconsciously there was the look of a martyr, not of a criminal, on her pale face, "I did it, Robert.

"I needed the money more than you can dream.

"I though you would not know until after we were married.

"Of course now that never can be.

"You will hate and despise me as I deserve; but, oh, say once that you forgive me."

"You did this thing? False, treacherous woman!

"For what could you have asked me, even to my heart's blood, that I would not have granted you?

"You, too, loved me but for my wealth.

"Am I indeed cursed among men?

"And this money—you needed it?

"You mean that you lover needed it.

"For yourself you would have asked me; for him you dared not.

"Forgive you?

"If you mean that I should not prosecute the woman who in six short weeks was to have been my wife—yes; if you mean other forgiveness—never!"

He left her there, cowering on the floor like some guilty thing.

For hours Robert Dare was like a madman.

Then he grew calm.

Little by little he recalled all she had said to him—the clear look in her lovely eyes as they met his—the quivering of the delicate lips.

Fool that he had been to believe her though self-confessed a hundred times.

He would return to her once more; he would beg her to tell him all the truth—nay, he loved her so well that he would forgive her all—if——if that she still loved him, and still were true to him.

But the maid who opened the door to him was in tears.

Miss Edna was very ill, she said. She feared she would not live.

They admitted him to her room.

She lay tossing in brain fever; but standing there beside her, Robert Dare learned all the truth, and, as he had loved, so now he worshipped.

She opened her eyes, after many weary days, at last to consciousness—opened them to find herself supported in her lover's arms.

"Hush, my darling," he whispered, "not a word.

"I know all.

"It is my shoulders upon which henceforth the burden must lie; and see—already they have scanned it!"

He turned, and out from the shadow came another form, and Rodney knelt at the bed, with a broken prayer for forgiveness.

"You see, darling," Robert continued, "we have found our brother.

"He will be true to himself henceforth.

"For his future I will provide.

"The past is buried, we will not resurrect it.

"Oh, my love, my white, unstained love, Heaven has indeed been good, for it has given you back to me."

A MAN is only as old as he feels.

DEATH AND BURIAL IN SPAIN.

"THEY will never return! The bright days of yore has gone: the friends we loved have gone; and they will never return to us again." So say all classes in Spain, in their hour of bereavement and desolation—"the fair spring, will come with its wealth of smiling fields, and painted flowers; the summer heats will come; the tropic, the autumnal rains—all will return; but the hours, days, years, and friends that have passed come no more!"

Children of nature, holding their tenure of life by natural more than artificial right, it is at spring and fall that the Spanish die; in the summer heats, deaths are very rare; and in the chilly, but little-varying temperature of the winter, still more rare.

And so the Spaniards call Autumn the "Harvest of the aged," and Spring, the "Harvest of the young," and almost invariably, it is at night the Host is carried to the dying.

It is 8 or 9 P. M. of autumnal eve; suddenly from the old church tower ring out three, then three more, then three more—a trinity of sharp clangs of one bell: the priest assemble in the chapel—they live hard by, in their clergy-house, and one always keeps a lamp outside his window, in wakeful slumbers, ready to rise if summoned and carry the Host to any poor urn—and, in five minutes, heralded by a boy in red petticoats, ringing his bell, and preceded by six candle-bearers, the clergy carrying the Host pass up the silent street; servants open the shutters, and place a candle in the window; they crouch down, and murmur prayers, their hands clasped around each other's waists.

The tinkle of the bell waxes fainter and fainter along the dusky and winding street: in a semicircle of lights, with two policemen, sword in hand, on guard, the lay processionists stand outside the sick man's door, while the priests walk upstairs to administer the Host to the dying man.

All around are heard the sounds of woe; the hysterical wailing and weeping; the men are smoking the soothing cigarette, that universal and chief comfort in this land, and stand, reverently, here and there.

But there are some terrible diseases, in which the Host cannot be administered.

The patient cannot retain the wafer, or he is too far gone to swallow it; it cannot be.

The friends are consulted, and they say, "We desire, on his behalf, that the Church should give him extreme unction," which is done, only however in desperate cases. The bed-clothes are turned down; with due decency, the forehead, chest, soles of the feet, etc., are "anointed with oil in the name of the Lord," and the kiss is given, and the sufferer dies.

In this semi-tropic climate, there is none of that keeping of the cold clay in the house as long as possible, and the funeral follows close upon the very heels of death.

In ancient days; in Spain, the dead were robed, according to their sex, in the garb of monk and nun, and thus buried.

But now they are buried, according to taste, in white, or, more often, in their ordinary clothes; a babe would be laid out in its white baby clothes; a bride, in her wedding-dress.

The short while the body lies in state, oftentimes in a room with window open to the street, lighted candles burn all around; and the body, in its slight coffin, is literally covered with flowers.

There is no, or very little crape known in Spain, save in the larger cities; a plain black dress is the usual mourning; the lady friends of the family kneel round the coffin, kiss the cold forehead, and turn silently away.

The priests, some four or five would be the average number, are at the door; if the coffin be that of a child, it is very slight, not to say flimsy, and painted of a light blue, picked out with gilt stars, costing two dollars more or less; if of a grown up person, it is of slight or massive wood, according to the pecuniary means of the family.

The lid is constantly left open.

Every male friend of the family is waiting outside; the laborer has left his hoe in the field, the carpenter his workshop, the tailor his counter, all, in fact, who knew the dead man, follow his remains to their last earthly resting-place, the priests going; before, in white and black robes, with cap on head, preceded by choristers and mace-bearer, and lights in costly lanterns, and singing the mournful strains of the Spanish funeral anthem.

At the cemetery gates the ceremony, so far as the Church is concerned, is at an end the priests turn back, the crowd, high and low walking side by side, as befits men who walk in the presence of a common foe.

The bricklayer, trowel in hand, stands ready beside the opened niche, the coffin is pushed in, bricked up, cigarette are lit, and the crowd wends its way home.

Within three days a printed paper is sent round by the mourning family, to notify their friends on what day and at what hour they will hold their funeral reception, and a most simple and touching ceremony it is.

The days of mourning are strictly observed; those of a widow should number a year and one month, after which she may "change her name."

The bereaved family sit in their reception room in deep mourning; you pass in, express your sympathy in kindly words, and pass on to your usual business.

Each year, as it rolls round in its quiet course and brings the anniversary of the Spaniard's day of grief, is marked by a solemn service in the mortuary chapel of the parish church, and from the dark incense-laden aisles the simple prayers of all who loved their lost one ascend up to God.

Maude's Ring.

BY W. H. RENCKERT.

DR. ANDOVER threw himself into the big leather-covered chair before his study fire with a little weary sigh.

He was a fine-looking man of thirty; not handsome, but noble and manly-looking—one to be trusted for ever, with his broad white brow, and grave, clear grey eyes.

Dr. Andover's patients—especially the poorer class and the children—turned to him instinctively for advice and sympathy.

Poor old Betty Cary, a bedridden paralytic, could not speak to him without sending tears of gratitude.

Little Jane Ellis, suffering with an incurable hip disease, looked upon him as a sort of god upon earth.

But fate had lately frowned upon him.

In the first place, the bank in which the greater part of his small little fortune was deposited, had failed; and directly upon this came the news that some mining stocks in which he had invested were worthless, or [illegible].

[illegible] had hoped to call wife by Christmas time.

A girl who, though not wealthy herself, had been extravagantly educated by her wealthy uncle, in whose luxurious home she lived.

He knew that no privation had ever come to her; she was a petted darling, with hands like a baby's.

Lovely, dainty, useless as she seemed, Dr. Andover had poured the whole passion of his great heart out upon her; and you are not to think him weak because, just at first, when the news of his ill fortune came to him, he shrank and trembled under it, thinking of the girl he loved.

For he must give her up, there was no doubt about that.

He could not ask her to share the fate of a poor physician who depended upon his fees for a living.

So Dr. Andover had written her a brave farewell letter just a month before the time arranged for their wedding, informing her of his altered fortunes, and releasing her from her engagement to him; and he had received no answer, although it was now Christmas week.

The doctor was worn out with exposure to rough weather and many sleepless nights.

The demands upon his time and strength had been greater than usual, yet he had replied to them all, never failing in kindly courtesy beside the couch of Betty Cary any more than in the luxurious chamber of Madame Goldschmidt, who fed him so generously.

It was Christmas week, and Maude was to have been his own next Friday evening.

This thought tortured him unceasingly, together with some words in a letter which had reached him a few days before—a letter from an acquaintance who was visiting in the city where Maude lived.

"I met your *fiancee* at a party last evening," he had written.

"I admire your choice.

"She was the brightest, loveliest girl there."

Dr. Andover experienced a cruel sense of desolation as he turned that sentence over in his mind.

Maude had not loved him after all.

She could be gay and bright when they were forever separated.

The study fire smouldered to ashes, and still he sat there, weary and sad, until from sheer exhaustion he fell into an uneasy slumber.

About midnight he awoke, alternately burning and shivering, while a dull pain throbbed in his temples.

He was his own patient now, so he swallowed a powder and hastened to bed; and when his landlady came in the morning to call him, she found him unable to rise from his pillow, feverish and half delirious.

* * * * * * * *

Christmas morning came, bright and frosty—a day after good St. Nicholas' own heart, and the doctor, a trifle better, although weak and languid, opened his eyes to close them again immediately, with a little pang.

This was to have been his wedding-day!

He could hear the merry salutations in the street, the clash of bells, and the pealing organ from St. Paul's Church over the way, and the sunlight, and mirth, and gladness made his own pain seemed the keener—just for a moment until his generous heart could gather strength and reassert itself and be glad because others were glad.

His landlady, who had been like a fond mother to him, came in presently with a very smiling expression upon her broad face.

Many of his grateful patients had remembered him with some little Christmas tokens.

Mrs. Derby had placed them upon the table at his bedside; but now she held in her hand a small package addressed to him in a lady's familiar hand, and registered in a distant city.

Maude had returned the engagement ring.

Dr. Andover received the package in silence, and Mrs. Derby looked at him with a crestfallen expression.

"I thought you would be so pleased, doctor.

"I've come to know Miss Everleth's handwriting you see, I supposed she had sent you a Christmas present.

"The package came two days ago when you were delirious, and I made bold to send the lady a telegram telling her of your illness.

"[illegible]"

"[illegible] am in return, stating that Miss Everleth would start at once to come to you.

"Now that is the sort of girl to make a man a good wife.

"She will probably be here to-day."

To-day!

Dr. Andover listened to Mrs. Derby in bewilderment.

What did it all mean?

With trembling fingers he tore off the wrapper of the tiny package, and opened a jeweler's case.

There, upon its bed of purple lay a wide gold finger-ring—extraordinarily wide—the inside of which was completely covered with fine lettering.

And Dr. Andover read slowly, through blinding raptures tears the words which the jeweler's instruments had traced there—the grand old Scripture words which had arisen in the heart of the girl who thus proved herself worthy of him, when his letter had come to her after many weary days of delay.

"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

Mrs. Derby slipped out of the room, crying herself at the sight of Dr. Andover, usually so calm and strong, and self-possessed, sobbing like a baby over Maude's Christmas token.

It was nearly noon when Maude herself arrived.

She had removed her wraps in Mrs. Derby's room, and after a light tap on the sick man's door, she entered.

Dr. Andover had thought her lovely in her exquisite party, and carriage, and home toilets, but never had she seemed so sweet and gracious and womanly as now, when in her pale grey traveling costume, her lovely face a little pale with weariness and excitement, her mouth tremulous, and her dark eyes glowing with a solemn light, she glided in her swift noiseless way across the room to his side.

"My dear [illegible]!"

"My own, sweet, true-hearted darling!" cried the doctor, clasping both hands about her and drawing her face down to his own.

And presently, after the first greetings were over, Maude explained—

"Your letter was delayed in some way.

"I did not get it until a week ago.

"You remember the great piece of gold which you sent me from California two year ago?

"Well, when I got your letter I took that gold to a jeweler, and had it made into that ring.

"And then, after I received Mrs. Derby's telegram, I made uncle promise to bring me to you at once.

"I would have come alone if he had not come with me, horrible and unconventional as my fashionable friends would have called me.

"Why, dear! what a silly butterfly you must have thought me!

"And do you think I am good for nothing but to dance and sing, and play the piano?

"I assure you, sir"—and here she doubled one small white fist in a very threatening fashion under his very nose—"this hand, which you consider so weak and useless, can make most delicious bread, and pies, and cakes; can even make beds, and sweep, and wash dishes.

"Aunt Alice never neglected that most [illegible] part of my education, and I am sure I [illegible] make a most excellent wife for a poor man.

"That is, dear"—and here she flushed [illegible]

Dr. Andover [illegible] first words against his shoulder, and as soon as she could free herself from his unconventional embrace, she began anew to coax and [illegible] but finally yielded; and the result was that, at five o'clock that afternoon, Maude Everleth was made Dr. Andover's wife, and at once asserted her authority by taking upon herself the duties of nurse.

Of course, under such treatment he recovered rapidly; and every day grew to appreciate more and more the loyalty and worth of the sweet little woman who had not failed him in his dark hour.

EVERYONE of us, whatever our speculative opinions, knows better than he practices, and recognizes a better law than he obeys.

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New Publications.

"Consuelo," by George Sand, just published by T. B. Peterson & Brothers, Philadelphia, stands in the very highest niche accorded to fiction. It is an artistic and ideal romance of colossal power and fascination. Treating largely of music and [illegible] and [illegible] in every development of the [illegible] plot is grand, its wealth, and [illegible] the subject is handled and [illegible] beyond [illegible] words.

"Paul and Persis" is a story of Revolutionary times, located in the Mohawk Valley, by Mary E. Brush. It is a lively, well-told tale, in which the Indians, soldiers, hair-breadth escapes, and other peculiarities of such narratives appear in abundance. It has the merit, however, of not being overdrawn or sensational, and, while it is more to please the young—its hero and heroine being children—the older may also derive from it satisfactory reading. Lee & Shepard, Publishers, Boston. For sale by Claxton & Co., Philadelphia. Price, $1.50.

In "Traits of Representative Men," with portraits, by George W. Bungay, we have a volume of sketches giving something of the history and character of nearly forty representative men, comprising poets, orators, philosophers, financiers, soldiers, statesmen, and other leading men in their various walks of life. Among those sketched are the following: James Russell Lowell, Theodore Thomas, Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, Rev. Dr. John Hall, Henry W. Longfellow, Thurlow Weed, William M. Evarts, Cyrus W. Field, Thaddeus Stevens, Thomas C. Acton, Edwin Booth, Elihu Burritt, R. H. Stoddard, Reverdy Johnson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles J. Folger, Frederick Douglass, Henry Bergh, Rufus Choate, Sir John A. MacDonald, Rev. David Swing, Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs, Morgan Dix, Edward Eggleston, Rev. Robert Collyer, and others. The volume is handsomely printed on fine super-calender paper, and with its illustrations and handsome binding, is well adapted to the holiday season. Price, $1.50. Fowler & Wells, Publishers, New York. For sale by Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia.

From Prang & Co., Art and Educational Publishers, Boston, Mass., we have received a set of their magnificent prize Christmas cards. It is not saying more than is just to call these the very handsomest works of the kind ever produced. Prettier objects in the way of pictorial ornaments it would be impossible to find, and nothing to the tasteful mind could be more acceptable as a holiday present. The cards are sold in three forms: plain, with silk fringe, cord and tassels, and on heavy gilt-edged mounts. The following are their subjects: Good Will to All Men, Good Tidings of Great Joy, Peace on Earth, Good Santa Claus, Merry Christmas, Gathering Holly. We advise our readers to send for a catalogue. Prang & Co., Boston, Mass.

A source of much pleasure and profit may be found in "Twenty-four Pictures from Mother Goose," which are intended for coloring by young or old artists. The pictures are full-page, on excellent paper, and full instructions are given for their coloring, so that anyone may try their hand at this now fashionable art amusement. T. W. Tilton & Co., Publishers, Boston, Mass. Price, 50 cents.

We need only mention the name of "Chatterbox" to excite expectation. The publishers have issued it for the holidays of '87, and thus it is saying much it seems better than ever before. Everybody knows "Chatterbox" contains just what the young people want, and with its wealth of good reading of all kinds, and almost exhaustless store of good pictures, brings pleasure and instruction wherever it goes. [illegible] of course many other books for [illegible] Publishers, Boston. For sale by Porter & Coates, Philadelphia.

"The United States Art Directory and Year" is a guide for artists, art students, travelers, etc., compiled by M. R. Koehler. It treats exclusively of the educational, social and mercantile bearings of art. All those who are all interested in art matters, as a business will find it of great value. Cassell, Potter & Galpin, Publishers, New York. For sale by Porter & Coates, Philadelphia. Price, 50 cents.

"The Knockabout Club Alongshore" is the story of a party of young men on a trip from Boston to the midnight sun. It is by C. A. Stephens, who has already written several popular works of a similar character. The idea is excellent, the reading entertaining and improving, and the pictures abundant and excellent. Altogether it is one of the best holiday books of the kind we have seen. Among its other pictorial beauties are four pages of colored pictures. Published by Estes & Lauriat, Publishers, Boston. For sale by Porter & Coates, Philadelphia. Price, $1.25.

[illegible] and [illegible] It starts [illegible] simple enough to be understood by a child, and the designs given are calculated to stimulate effort. Price, paper flacks, 50 cents. T. W. Tilton & Co., Publishers, Boston.

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Our Young Folks.

LOST IN THE WOODS.

BY W. H. BENCKERT.

"TELL me, Bunchie, are you asleep?"

"No, dear.

"What's the matter?

"Why are you getting up in the middle of the night?"

"There, now, that shows you have been asleep," said Jack Mason.

"Nurse has gone down to supper, and I have been sitting on the side of my bed to keep myself awake.

"I've got such a jolly idea, Bunchie.

"Nurse is going for a holiday to-morrow, and I vote we get out all by ourselves and go to Crab-tree Woods.

"We will take some dinner with us and have a jolly time."

"But what will mother say?"

"Oh, she won't know anything about it, for she sent a telegram just after you had gone to bed to say she and father would not be home till to-morrow night.

"So you see we shall be left in charge of Alice all day till nurse comes home, and you know how she punished you last time.

"Now, do say you'll come, dear, and I'll take you to the Pixies' Parlor; perhaps we shall see them dancing."

This last inducement, following on the gentle reminder of the punishment from hasty Alice, quite conquered all Bunchie's reluctance, and she promised to go with her brother.

After a few minutes spent in proposing all sorts of grand schemes for the morrow, Jack kissed his sister and went into his own little room next door, where he tattooed a lot of his signatures on the back of a chair in the wall, till a nurse interposed and ordered the young gentleman to bed.

The next morning the children demolished their breakfast with extra quickness, and when nurse went to dress the baby made a raid on the cupboard, and secured some bread-and-butter and cake, which they stowed away in a bag of Bunchie's, and then watched the clock with impatience.

"What a good thing I did that!" exclaimed Jack, as he picked up something he had knocked off the mantelpiece.

"Of course we must take some matches, because then we can make a fire.

"Every one lights a fire in a wood."

"But what's the good of a fire when you have nothing to cook?" asked Bunchie.

"And please, Jack dear, don't put them in your pocket: suppose they go off."

"You little goose; just as if matches ever did go off.

"You are thinking of father's rifle.

"If I were a little older now, we could take that and shoot some birds, and cook them by the fire."

Bunchie trembled, and was inwardly thankful that Jack was not "a little older."

The time seemed to pass very slowly, but at last nurse started, and Alice gave the children permission to play in the garden till dinner-time.

"That's a blessing," said Jack, as he listened to her retreating footsteps.

"Now come along to the side gate; if we go through the beech-walk we shall not pass any of the windows."

"But where's the dinner?" asked Bunchie.

"Oh, I've got that all right.

"I hid it by the side gate some time ago, and I managed to take a little pie out of the safe too.

"Of course we will tell mother when she comes home.

"Now, come along!

"Remember we are travellers going to discover a new country, and you must be very fierce, and brave, if we meet any one.

"I do wish we had father's rifle, though."

They passed unobserved through the gate and into the beech wood.

At first Bunchie felt timid, but very soon the sight of the squirrels winking their bright eyes at them, and then scuttling up the trees as if they were inviting them to a game of "touch," made her forget her nervousness.

It was no delicious, too, to be able to tear after the rabbits, and to open the beech-nuts which lay about in their little rough, three-cornered sheaths, and eat as many as they liked, without being told they would spoil their dinner.

"Don't you think grown-up people are a bother?" said Jack, confidentially, as he cleaned his pen-knife after opening a lot of nuts.

"They are always saying 'Don't.'

"Just think of the fun we have had already and we haven't nearly got to the Crab-tree Woods yet."

No, you must know that Crab-tree Woods were very large indeed, and that the children had never been beyond the borders, so that it was really very naughty and very dangerous for them to be going about like this.

They walked gaily on, rushing after butterflies or pretty flowers, and chatting merrily about fairies, till at last they were both thoroughly tired and ravenously hungry, and looked for dinner.

Bunchie dropped on the ground with a great sigh of relief, then exclaimed—

"Oh, Jack, I am so sorry!

"I believe I've broken them!" and, sure enough the eggs which Jack had given her to carry were smashed.

This was the first drawback they had to their happiness; but as they found the pie was a mixture of veal and ham with a substantial crust, they did not waste many regrets on the unfortunate eggs.

Misfortunes never come alone, and the children were soon in much consternation to find they had no water with them.

Both of them were thirsty, and they could only eat half as much as they really needed till they could get a good drink.

Just then the sun disappeared, and it began to rain.

They stood with their heads back, and tongues thrust out, but hardly a drop found its way to them.

The foliage was very thick, and what little rain did penetrate it, always caught the tip of their ears, the side of their chins, or the middle of their eyes—anywhere, in fact, but their mouths.

"Why, Bunchie," said Jack, "that must be the Pixies' Parlor.

A soft, moss-covered hollow, which looked as if it had been scooped out to provide a dancing-room for the little fairies, lay quite close to them.

The trees were a little farther apart here, and the sun shone brightly down, lighting up the scene and gladdening the children.

They stood hand in hand for a few minutes, talking of the merry little spirits which perhaps danced about there in the moonlight, and then, being quite tired out, they lay down on the soft green carpet and fell asleep.

When they awoke they felt quite refreshed, and then determined to go home at once.

If they had not been so thirsty, they would have been quite happy.

Poor children! they had yet to learn that neither the little ones nor their elders can be really happy and comfortable when they are doing wrong.

Just as they were leaving the Pixies' Parlor they were startled by a child's cry.

At first they could not see any one, but in another moment a tiny creature of about three years old stepped out from a mossy corner which they had not noticed.

With jet-black hair, all tossed and tumbled with sleep, and large, dark eyes glistening with teardrops, she looked almost like one of the fairies the children had been talking about.

She stopped her cries to stare at the strangers, and then, trotting up to Jack, she held up her arms and said—

"Oo take baby home."

Jack was a good-natured boy at most times, and was sorry for the poor little thing, who was evidently lost; so he picked her up, and staggered under her weight for a few yards, she meanwhile, contentedly patting his face.

Difficulties certainly seemed increasing, and they had not gone far when Jack was quite exhausted.

But the wee child would not let go of his neck, and he was obliged to sit down with her on his lap, and hold a council with Bunchie.

They were at their wits' end; the only things they knew for certain were that they could not leave the little girl in the wood, and that they had not the least idea how to find their way out.

"Oh, how I wish mother were here!" said Bunchie, choking down the tears which would come into her eyes.

"Mother! mother!" cried the little gipsy, catching the one word which she understood; and then she began to sob as if her heart would break.

A stale biscuit out of Jack's pocket soon comforted her, however, and the weary child fell asleep.

Laying her gently on the mossy ground, Jack covered her with his waistcoat and handkerchief.

"Now then, Bunchie" he said, "we must do something.

"Don't begin to cry, dear, please, or I shall do it too, and what will become of us?

"I do wish nurse would come now.

"Grown-up people aren't so bad after all, I think.

"Let us walk up and down about here, so that we don't lose the baby.

"Now, shall I shout for help?"

Bunchie said "Yes," but she trembled from head to foot when Jack put his hand to his mouth and shouted—

"Help! help!

"Lost! lost!"

"Supposing the gipsies should hear us," she said, clinging to him.

"I don't care who hears us, as long as we don't have to stay here.

"Fancy stopping here all night.

"There may be rats, or foxes, or even wolves.

"Help!"

But no answer came.

"I know what we must do," said Jack, at last, "we must light a fire; then if it gets dark we can keep the wild beasts off, you know."

Little Bunchie, only too easily led into mischief, helped willingly to gather the wood; and when at last a match was struck and the whole heap blazed and crackled and hissed, the two children forgot all about their former fears.

"Yes, and all about the little gipsy baby too!

"If only I had not broken the eggs," said Bunchie, gazing at a little heap of red ashes she had poked out.

"Do you know," said Jack, meditatively, as he gave a vigorous poke to the fire and set it blazing furiously, "I believe that's always a big fib in everything.

"You see we should have had a jolly dinner, but we had no water; and we should have had a regular good time in the wood, but we couldn't get it, and that's—"

A hissing and crackling in one of the branches of the tree against which they had thoughtlessly built their fire stopped poor Jack's philosophy.

For five minutes the children remained gazing at the burning branch as if petrified.

It had been a dry summer and autumn, and the tree seemed to burn like matchwood.

Suddenly a shrill scream roused them from their stupor, and reminded them of the little gipsy child.

She had been lying the other side of the burning tree, and was now standing terrified, holding out her arms to Jack, whom she could see through the flames.

Before Jack knew what she was going to do, Bunchie flew past the fire and caught the little child in her arms.

But, alas! as she did so her dress caught fire.

She staggered, too, under the weight of the struggling child, and both fell.

A terrible heat and agonizing pain were in her legs, and she fancied she must have fallen into the fire.

Jack's voice reached her, screaming for help.

Suddenly the cry was answered by a man and Bunchie felt something thrown over her, then she was lifted in some one's arms and Jack's voice whispered close to her ears—

"All right, darling; I'm here, and we are going home."

Meantime the little gipsy child, who was unhurt, had recognized her father, and trotted contentedly along by his side, holding Jack's hand and getting an occasional lift in his arms by way of rest.

The gipsy inquired where the children lived, and was surprised to learn how far they had come; but he promised to take them home at once, especially as poor Bunchie's moans showed how much she was suffering.

He, poor man, had been hunting for his own little girl, who had wandered from the camp early in the morning, and of whose disappearance he had only lately heard; and when he heard from Jack and the child herself all that had happened, his gratitude knew no bounds.

"I could get some one to come and fetch little Maggie away," he said; "but it would waste a lot of time, as we are a long way out of earshot of the camp; so if you can manage to get her along, I think it would be better for the little mussie's sake to go home at once."

So they started immediately.

It seemed hours to poor Jack before they got out of the wood; and then, when they suddenly saw a number of lights moving about, as if the stars had got loose and were shining down near the ground, he gave a great shout.

"Father, father, here we are.

"Bunchie is hurt, and we won't run away any more."

And they did not.

The gipsy only waited to see them safely in their parents' care, and then, refusing any reward, and giving Jack's hand such a squeeze as made him wince, he took little Maggie in his arms and made off home.

Bunchie's legs were sadly burnt, but she bore the pain without a murmur, only too thankful that she was thus carefully looked after and tended.

Jack was her constant companion and unwearying amuser; and what he endured after the disastrous visit to Crab-tree Woods was indeed a heavy punishment to him.

"It does seem hard," he said to his father one day.

"I was at the bottom of it all, and poor Bunchie has all the pain to bear.

"But I'll never lead her into mischief again, father."

TWO CURIOUS COURTSHIPS.—One of the most curious cases of courtship recorded happened about the close of the seventeenth century. The daughter of a Berkshire baronet, who disdained the numerous lovers who attempted to win her affections, finally fell in love with a poor attorney, when she met him for the first time at a wedding in Reading. She sent him a challenge, alleging that he must give satisfaction for injuries received at his hands. She appeared masked, and gave him the choice of either fighting or marrying her. His second, who was also unaware of the woman's identity or the cause of her strange conduct, advised his principal to marry her.

After the ceremony during which she still wore the mask, they drove to her rich home, and after withdrawing a few moments she returned, and at once captivated her husband by her beauty and tasteful dress. This man, Benjamin Child, was afterward made a [illegible] to the [illegible]. "The History of Women," an English work published in 1779, details various [illegible]s of courtship then practiced in some of the European colonies of America. It has this curious statement, which beaux and belles will find it difficult to believe: "When two Pennsylvania lovers meet with any remarkable opposition from their friends they go off together on horseback; the lady riding before, and the gentleman behind her. In this situation they present themselves before a magistrate, to whom she declares that she has run away with her lover and has brought him there to be married. So solemn an avowal the magistrate is not at liberty to reject, and they are married accordingly."

WHY is a drunkard like a bad politician? Because he is always poking his nose into measures that spoil the constitution.

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READY WIT.

IT is sometimes said that in cases of danger "absence of body" is preferable to "presence of mind," but the quickness of apprehension and readiness of action commonly described by the latter term are certainly most valuable qualities.

Ready wit has often saved its possessor from all manner of ills, advanced him in life, made him popular or famous.

A quick-witted person will even turn apparently untoward circumstances to his advantage.

The amusing series of "things we had rather have left unsaid," lately appearing in Punch, shows the other side of the picture; how do many, though well-meaning, people commit the most terrible blunders from sheer slowness or dullness of apprehension.

The lady who apologizes to the artist for condemning his pictures because "I am no judge, I only repeat what everyone says"—the friend who assures the clergyman that the stranger who took his place "preached the best sermon we have had for years," are types of the dense-witted part of the world.

History is full of examples of the success attained by quick wit.

Horace Walpole gives an instance of it in a Paris fisherwoman.

The Dauphin having recovered from a serious illness, the fisherwoman waited on the King (Louis XV) to offer their congratulations.

"What would have become of us had our dear Dauphin died?" said the fisherwoman; "we should have lost our all."

"Yes," put in a second fisherwoman, who observed the King's brow darken at this [illegible] equivocal compliment to himself, "We should, indeed, have lost our all, for our good King would never have survived his son's death."

It was ready wit that enabled William the Conqueror to persuade his followers that his fall, on stepping ashore in England, was an omen of good instead of evil fortune.

"I have taken seisin' of this land," he exclaimed, rising with his hands full of earth; and the ready turn dispelled the superstitious fears which the accident had occasioned.

Quickness of repartee was cultivated as an art in the salons of the ancient regime. A ready answer, a witty mot, made its perpetrator's reputation.

One sometimes wonders if all the good stories of this kind that have been preserved are the records of veritable impromptues or whether the wit elaborated the bon mot at home, and trusted some friend to lead the conversation into a channel that would allow him to utter it.

Do we not ourselves, when the opportunity has gone by, often think of some ready answer or quick retort; and were all the neat speeches that have been chronicled really uttered on the spur of the moment? If so, society was certainly livelier in former days than at present.

The lower orders often possess great readiness at repartee.

Few retorts are better than that of the pavior to Sydenham, the great seventeenth-century physician.

The doctor was complaining of the bad manner in which the pavement was laid in front of his house, adding, "And now you throw down the earth to hide your bad work."

"Well, doctor," said the man quietly, "Mans is not the only bad work that the earth hides."

Old biographers are fond of including "a ready wit," among the virtues of the subject of their memoirs; indeed, dull folks appear to have been looked upon in former days with extreme contempt.

Dr. Johnson was very outspoken in his opinion regarding stupid people.

Inveighing against a worthy but extremely foolish female acquaintance, a lady present reminded him that she was a very good woman, adding, "and I trust we shall meet [illegible] in Paradise."

"Madam," roared the exasperated doctor, "I never desire to meet fools anywhere."

BLOOD ACCUSATION.—"The recently published History of Posen, has an edict promulgated by Casimir the Great in 1334, one of the articles in which is to the following effect: "In harmony with the decision of the Pope we strongly forbid our people to accuse the Jews of employing human blood, since it is well known that the Jews, in accordance with their religious ordinance, must abstain from using any kind of blood. When however, a Jew is accused by a Christian of having killed a Christian child, the charge will have to be proved by not less than three Christians and as many Jews. If the accusation be substantiated, the murderer shall be condemned to prescribed punishment. But if the witnesses should prove the innocence of the alleged murderer, and if he is acquitted of the crime, then the Christian accuser shall justly suffer the penalty to which we would have condemned the Jew."

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IN THE TWILIGHT.

BY RITA.

When daylight sinks in silence down the west,
  And evening's shadows sleep upon the sea:
And nature dons her sombre robe of rest,
  My tired heart, dear memory, turns to thee:
And as the shades pass slowly, slowly by,
  And gleams of daylight grow more far apart,
The thoughts of life from out my spirits fly:
  Amid the days of old my spirits fly,
And old-time brightness falls upon my heart.

Then 'neath thy soothing finger fades away
  The cares and sorrows of my present life:
Amid the days of old my fancies stray
  And bless the thoughts with which my soul is rife
Then all the stern realities of now,
  Are softened by the drapery of the past;
And the sweet radiance falling from thy brow
  Upon the darker hours of life is cast.

As the stars rise within the silent sky
  So come the faces of the dear ones lost:
And as beneath thy power time's sorrows die,
  We live again with those we loved the most:
The shadows of the night fall softly down
  Unheeded then: for inward turns the sight:
And twilight's hour thy gentle art can crown
  With dear remembrance of an old-time light.

When daylight sinks in silence down the west
  Then memory brings my wandering thoughts to thee:
And thy loved face again can make me blest
  Although in life it may not come to me:
When day with all its strife and care is past
  And evening brings thy face to still my pain,
I wonder if that night whose peace shall last
  Will bring my treasures back to me again.

BIRD LORE.

FROM the earliest ages birds have attracted the interest and observation of mankind, and the belief that their flight gave some intimation of the will of the gods prevailed amongst many nations of antiquity.

Amongst the Romans this belief in auguries was reduced to a regular system, and they held that by means of the birds, whom they believed to be the messengers of Jupiter, men received intimations of what the gods willed they should or should not do, but not any revelations of the future.

The birds from which these auguries were drawn they divided into two classes—those which taught by their voice, and those which taught by their flight. To the former class belonged the crow, the raven, the owl, and the hen. It was considered a good omen when a raven appeared to the right, or when a crow appeared to the left.

Of those birds whose flight was studied, the eagle, the bird especially sacred to Jupiter, was the most important, and next to him the vulture. Every sound and motion of each bird had a different meaning, according to the different circumstances or times of the year when it was observed.

Amongst the Greeks auguries from the flight of birds gradually gave way to the oracles, and their revelations were supposed to come from Apollo and the other gods, not from Zeus or Jupiter, from whom the Romans believed they received them.

Other auspices were taken from the feeding of chickens, and were especially employed on military expeditions. They were kept in a cage under the care of a person called the Pullarius, and when the auspices were to be taken, the Pullarius opened the cage, and threw to the chickens pulse, or a kind of soft cake; if they refused to come out, or to eat, or uttered a cry, or beat their wings, or flew away, the signs were considered unfavorable. On the contrary, if they ate greedily, so that something fell from their mouth and struck the earth, this was held a very favorable sign.

Pliny enumerates five creatures whose figures had replaced the handful of straw or fern fixed to the top of a spear or pole, which formed the earliest Roman standards; but about B. C. 104, the wolf, horse, and bear, and minotaur were discarded, and the eagle only retained.

It was made of silver and bronze, and with extended wings, but was probably of small size, since a standard-bearer under Julius Cæsar is said, in circumstances of danger, to have wrenched the eagle from its staff, and concealed it beneath his girdle.

Under the Empire, the head of the reigning monarch was frequently placed below the eagle or other emblem, and received idolatrous honors from the soldiers. After Constantine had embraced Christianity, this head was replaced by a figure or emblem of Christ, handsomely woven in gold upon purple cloth.

It was the custom of the Romans to deify those of their emperors who died, leaving successors; and the rite of apotheosis, as it was called, was performed with great solemnities. When the great pyre of wood aromatics raised for the purpose had been ignited, from the highest and smallest story, as from a pinnacle, an eagle was let loose, to mount into the sky as the flames arose, and was supposed to carry with him from earth to heaven the soul of the emperor, to whom thenceforward divine honors were paid.

Medals struck in honor of an apotheosis frequently represent an altar with fire on it, from which an eagle is flying upwards. On the triumphal arch of Titus, he is shown mounting into heaven seated on an eagle's back.

This bird has been held in peculiar reverence by many nations, and regarded universally as monarch of the feathered tribes. The royal standard of Persia was a golden eagle with expanded wings, and the American eagle and the many imperial eagles of European countries, owe their significance to their Roman predecessors. In Geneva, where eagles are the arms of the town, some of these birds are always kept at the public expense.

The peacock, which is still sometimes eaten, was in former days a dish for state occasions; and an old English oath, "by cock and pie," is said to be derived from the custom of introducing, with much ceremony, at grand banquets, a huge peacock pasty, from one end of which protruded the bird's head, and from the other his beautiful train. This bird was supposed to be under the special protection of Juno, who had placed the eye of Argus in its tail.

Grains of Gold.

Duties fulfilled are always pleasures to the memory.

The error you hate, unless God keep you, you will embrace.

He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

Choose those companions who administer to your improvement.

Faith makes the heart firm, love makes it soft, hope expands it.

It is chance that makes brothers, but hearts that make friends.

If you wish to remove avarice, you must remove its mother—luxury.

Cast no dirt into the well that has given water when you were thirsty.

The more true merit a man has, the more does he applaud it in others.

Somebody else will if I don't. This is one of the devil's pet proverbs.

To be happy is not the purpose of our being; but to deserve happiness.

The follies of youth become the vices of manhood and the disgrace of old age.

You have cause to tremble if the Bible appears a commonplace book.

The superiority of some men is merely local. They are great because their associates are little.

All praise wrongly directed, or suggested by selfish motives, is an injurious element in society.

In the worst of times there is more cause to complain of an evil heart than of an evil world.

It is an argument of a candid, ingenious mind to delight in the good name and commendations of others.

The great mistake that some people make is, they think more of their cunning than they do of their honesty.

It is the part of a prudent man to conciliate the minds of others, and to turn them to his own advantage.

Men must be decided on what they will not do, and then they are able to act with vigor in what they ought to do.

To be perfectly just is an attribute of the Divine nature; to be so to the utmost of our abilities is the the glory of man.

The best etiquette for a man is not to boast of his virtues, and not to show off his power to one weaker than himself.

The first duties of every man are the duties of home; and he who neglects them cannot be supposed well to regard any other.

A right education is not merely the reading of many books, but the ability of making knowledge useful to ourselves and others.

Every one of us, whatever our speculative opinions, knows better than he practices, and recognizes a better law than he obeys.

Opposition is what we want, and must have, to be good for anything. Hardship is the native soil of manhood and self-reliance.

The perfection of conversation is not to play a regular sonata, but, like the Æolian harp, to await inspiration of the passing breeze.

It is is one thing to love truth, and to seek it, for its own sake, and quite another to welcome as much of it as tallies with our impressions and prejudices.

Wrong-doing is a road that may open fair, but it leads to trouble and danger. Well-doing, however rough and thorny at first, surely leads to pleasant places.

Real foresight consists in reserving our own forces. If we labor with anxiety about the future, we destroy that strength which will enable us to meet the future.

Birth, wealth, beauty, talents, may constitute eligibility for society, but to be distinguished in it, persons must be admired for admirable, and liked for agreeable, qualities.

Femininities.

Ladies who "never eat suppers," generally eat the most.

In fashionable society nothing promotes conversation so much as "a little music."

Some people often marry on the principle that what is not enough for one is quite sufficient for two.

Girls are more courageous than men. They are ready to make a match with a fellow twice their size.

"There is no fool like an old fool," remarks an exchange. Except the young fool that marries him.

Many a man who snarls and growls at his wife in public, is very loving and tender when no one is around. He has to be.

The Japanese believe that the first man was not Adam, but Ho-Sing, who made his wife of clay and baked her forty days.

We are glad that the ladies are learning so generally to play the violin, because in that case they are liable to use a chin-rest.

Some latter-day philosopher has said: "Send me all the dresses a woman has worn in the course of her life, and I will write her biography from them."

Eva Wehrle, of Cincinnati, had a pet Spitz dog, and on deciding to commit suicide, she first hanged the brute. The two dead bodies were found suspended side by side.

Do not tattle. Do not carry the gossip from one family to another. If you have a wife, just let out the job to her. She will do it more effectually.

A Vassar College miss reads the prayer book response thus: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without men. Ah, me!"

Mrs. Thomas Payne, the wife of a Monroe, W. Va., clergyman, is only eleven years old. The reverend gentleman is the one who should be spanked.

The hen-pecked husband is happy enough if he were only left alone, but he generally has some kind friend, who is perpetually urging him "not to stand it."

Fashion now decrees that a bridal tour need not last over three days, and some one says "most any sort of a couple can remain within doors that long."

A fashionable lady, who lost her pet poodle a short time since, was asked if she missed him. "No," she said, "my husband sort of takes his place in my affections."

Marriages between gentlemen of 80 and 90 years and widows of about the same age are becoming quite frequent, and yet they say that marriage is on the decline.

A Chicago lover bet his girl that he could tell what she was thinking of. He thought she was thinking of him, but she wasn't. She was studying how to make over an old dress so as to make it look new.

Two girls employed in a confectionery in Allegheny had a wrapping-up-kisses match for a prize of $40. One wrapped up 37 pounds in two hours and fifty-seven minutes, and the other 45 pounds.

There seems to be a great kick, so to speak, about ladies wearing their hats in the theatre, but not one single complaint even has reached us thus far for inveighing against their keeping them on at church.

An Indianapolis woman, asking for a divorce after twenty-eight months of married life, says of her husband: "On his home he made a prison, of his wife a prisoner, and of himself a prison guard."

A Chicago man has just invented a cast iron table-ware that looks like porcelain, and is in ecstasies when he sees a servant girl drop half a dozen cups, and shriek with horror at observing their failure to break.

There is a good story of an eccentric lady of unfortunately acquisitive habits, to the effect that she was on one occasion so affected by a charity sermon as to borrow $5 from her neighbor, and—put it in her pocket!

A Missouri paper says that a girl in that State dislocated her shoulder kicking at a cat. A St. Louis girl stepped on a cat, and called to the afternoon mistook the cat for a new æsthetic design worked into the carpet.

Utah has passed a law making wives felons, punishable by five years' imprisonment and a fine of $500, if they "destroy or dispose of" their husband's property. There will be more old clothes and less white China dogs with blue ears in Utah hereafter.

A lady was lamenting not long since the death of a young professional man who had never entered into the bonds of matrimony, and she concluded her remarks this way: "Yes, poor fellow, he is dead, and only nineteen young ladies claimed him."

Response of a youth to one of his friends who has just announced formally his approaching marriage: "I should like to be able to congratulate you both, but, you see, as I do not know the lady I can't conscientiously congratulate you, while as I do know you, I can't conscientiously congratulate the lady."

A new agony, and one that is in every way admirable, is for a young lady to entertain her gentleman caller with a few airs on that classical instrument, the banjo. The true and deep significance of this is—"Don't go to the minstrels any more; I will be your minstrel." Did you ever see love's dream set to music in more attractive shape?

A gentleman conversing with a group of ladies concerning an absent beauty of thirty at the very most, remarks, "How handsome she must have been." The words are greeted with sympathetic murmurs, and he continues imprudently, "And for that matter, she is so yet." A glacial silence ensues, with feverish fluttering of fans, and a few long-drawn sighs.

News Notes.

A London paper says that people who sneeze oftenest are the healthiest.

Ex-Governor Stanford wants to sell his modest cottage in San Francisco for $1,000,000.

A convict in the Idaho Penitentiary has recently invented several patentable articles.

The Salvation Army holds in different parts of the British Islands over 6,000 services every week.

Fire destroyed a schoolhouse in Crozen France, and the teacher and eight pupils burned to death.

In old days Lord Mayors were not permitted to go a greater distance from London than five miles.

There are now nearly seven hundred Chinamen in the New York and Brooklyn Sabbath-schools.

Last year the railroads of Great Britain killed over five hundred men, and wounded over six thousand.

In the religious census of Victoria three persons are credited with holding to the religion of "£, s, d."

The average income of the ministers of the Established Church of Scotland is about $600 of our money.

A six-year-old boy broke his neck out in Oregon county, the other day, in trying to turn a somersault.

A hand-car on the Utah and Northern Railroad ran into a herd of between seventy and eighty deer.

The recent revival in the Cincinnati Methodist churches resulted in over two thousand conversions.

It is proposed to garrison Egypt with British troops for three years, without consultation with the powers.

A woman in Portland, Oregon is suing her divorced husband for $5,000 for alleged breach of promise of marriage.

Californians find the cultivation of walnut trees as a regular crop extremely profitable. Ten years growth produces a tree twenty inches in diameter.

There are 300 professional gunners residing at Havre-de-Grace, Md., who make a comfortable living by shooting red-head and canvas-back ducks.

The level of the ground at the base of the Tarpeian Rock, in Rome, has so risen that the last one who attempted suicide received only a few slight bruises.

By means of a telephone a clergyman was enabled to have an audience forty miles distant from the one before which he preached in New Britain, Conn.

Recent returns give the Italian population on Jan. 1, 1882, at 28,951,274, a gain in ten years of 4,000,000, and this notwithstanding the enormous emigration.

A woman has just been chosen Superintendent of Schools at Barrington, R. I. It is the first time the position has ever been occupied by a woman in that State.

A foreigner on a German line, whose hat been blown off, pulled the string and stopped the train. On reaching a station he was sent to jail in default of $10.

A school-girl, in New Haven, Conn., fearing she would be late, ran so fast to school that she fell in a faint at the door, and remained unconscious for half an hour.

A thirteen-year-old girl living in Bayou Terrebonne, 35 miles from Houma, La., has a light brown beard two inches long and very heavy, except upon the upper lip.

At Rheinfelden, Germany, the Catholics offered the use of their church to the Protestants for the installation of a new pastor, and many of them attended the service.

A new wood, known as red wood, is becoming popular for interior decorations; it is not unlike mahogany in color, takes a high polish, and is less expensive than that wood.

A most remarkable innovation has taken place in the London Times. Editorial articles have appeared of less than half a column's length—a circumstance unprecedented.

The members and friends of the churches in this country contribute annually $105,902,000, $72,332,326 of which is used for church purposes, and the balance for benevolent purposes.

A patent has been taken out in Paris for a substance called dynamogene, intended to replace dynamite. Its manufacture and management are said to involve no danger, and the cost is 40 per cent. less than gunpowder.

In some parts of Spain, where butter is a rare article of merchandise, it is said, not by the pound, but by the yard. It is brought from the mountain districts in sheep's intestines, like sausages that are "tied off" with string in length required by the buyer.

One of the giant trees of the Calaveras grove, in California, is named the Otto Von Bismarck. An admirer of the German Premier, residing in San Francisco, has just sent him a five-foot photograph of the tree, expressly taken for this purpose, and enclosed in an elaborate frame of native wood.

THE RAW, BLUSTERING WINDS OF WINTER search out the weaknesses of the tender-chested, and in consequence, Coughs and Colds, Lung and Bronchial Complaints, more or less prevail. Should you contract a Cold, do not imprudently wait until by constant coughing you so irritate and inflame the Lungs as to bring yourself face to face with a serious Pulmonary Affection. Rather treat your symptoms rationally, and by the proper use of Dr. Jayne's Expectorant cure your Cough, and heal all accompanying Soreness of the Throat and Lungs.

"Presenting the Bride" Heard From

Port Oxford, Oregon, August 30, '82.

Editor Post—I received the picture, "Presenting the Bride," in due time, and all who have seen it are delighted with it. You may look for some subscribers from me shortly, as many of my friends expressed a desire to subscribe, and how could they feel otherwise, with such a paper, and such a premium?

J. W. C.

Oquawka, Ill., August 29, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—The picture, "Presenting the Bride," has come to hand, and in good condition. I am much pleased with it, indeed. I have shown it to some of my neighbors, and they all unite with me in voting it beautiful. Will send you some subscribers soon.

H. R. C.

Missentown, D. C., August 12, '82.

Editor Post—The picture premium, "Presenting the Bride," received. It is beautiful, and I am very much pleased with it. All who have seen the picture think it is just superb. Expect to get you numerous subscribers in a few days.

K. L. O'N.

Clinton, Ia., August 30, '82.

Editor Post—Your premium, "Presenting the Bride," came to hand all right. I cannot find language to express my thanks to you for the beautiful premium. I have received many premiums, but yours leads them all. Will send some subscriptions soon.

M. C.

Stratford, August 24, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—I received the beautiful picture, "Presenting the Bride," in due time, and am very much pleased with it. It is far ahead of my most sanguine expectations. Shall see what I can do for you in the way of subscribers.

W. H. H.

Chehalis, Wash. Ter., August 13, '82.

Editor Post—Have received my picture, "Presenting the Bride," and was surprised at its marvelous beauty. I am well pleased with it. I have shown it to several of my friends, and all say it is the handsomest and most valuable premium they ever saw.

A. M.

Pearsal, Tex., August 12, '82.

Editors Post—I received my premium for The Post, for which accept thanks. It is the most beautiful premium I ever saw.

U. S. F.

Chattanooga, August 17, '82.

Editor Post—I received your premium picture yesterday all sound, and am very much pleased with it. It is far ahead of the premiums usually offered by newspapers, and certainly ought to bring you many subscribers. Am quite proud of it.

W. E. B.

Terndale, Minn., August 12, '82.

Editor Post—I received my Photo-Oleograph, "Presenting the Bride," and think it very beautiful. Had it framed and hung up two hours after its arrival. It is admired by everybody.

F. E. B.

Jamestown, Ind., August 13, '82.

Editor Post—I received my premium last night, and think it very beautiful. I will with pleasure aid you in raising your subscription list, and I think I can get a great many subscribers for you.

I. F. D.

Peconic, La., August 18, '82.

Editor Post—The premium picture, "Presenting the Bride" received, and I consider it grand. I have shown it to several of my friends, and each and every one of them pronounce it beautiful.

O. G. P.

Berlinton, Ind., August 16, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—My beautiful premium Photo-Oleograph, "Presenting the Bride," came duly to hand, and it is even better than you claimed it to be. I will see what I can do for you in the way of new subscribers.

C. W. H.

Makand, Pa., August 17, '82.

Editor Post—I have received premium, "Presenting the Bride." It far surpasses my most sanguine expectations—perfectly lovely! Will get some subscribers for you.

L. L.

York, Pa., August 14, '82.

Editor Post—"Presenting the Bride" was delivered to me yesterday, and am highly pleased with it. We consider it a gem. Have given it a conspicuous place in our gallery for the inspection of our friends.

J. W. S.

Leesburgh, Kans., August 12, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Paper and premium received. The Post is a splendid literary journal. And the picture is very handsome. Am greatly pleased with it. Everyone who has seen the picture considers it grand.

G. G.

Columbiaville, Mich., August 12, '82.

Editor Post—Your premium, "Presenting the Bride," is indeed a beautiful gift of art, and cannot fail to please the most fastidious. Many thanks.

F. S. M.

Belvidere, Pa., August 18, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Your magnificent premium picture, "Presenting the Bride," at hand, and think it very beautiful. I am greatly pleased with it, and thank you very much for such a beautiful present. I have shown it to quite a number of people, and they all say it is the prettiest and richest premium they have ever had the pleasure of beholding. Will do all that lies in my power to increase your subscription list.

W. F. S.

Mount Pleasant, August 21, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Your premium picture, "Presenting the Bride," was duly received, and am more than pleased with it. It is by far the handsomest picture I ever saw.

G. L.

ÆSTHETIC ALPHABET.

A is Æsthetic, to which we "live up,"
B is for Blue in sweet teapot or cup.
C is Consummate, with soul-stirring sound,
D is for Dado, in all the rooms found.
E is to Excite tastes of the mass,
F is for "Fleshy," non-art-loving class.
G is for Green, in all tints and and sage,
H is for High Art, which is now all the rage.
I is "Intense"—most intensest young man,
J is for Japanese umbrella and fan.
K is for Kyrie-ites to spread the art craze,
L is for Lily to sit by and gaze.
M is for Mandle, high priest of his school,
(N's Narrow-minded who think him a fool.)
O is for Oendle, when his words fail,
P is for Peacock, a feather for all.
Q is for Queen Anne, in intensest of styles,
R is for Rot—dress, house, and tiles.
S is for Sunflower, a dream of delight,
T is for Too Too, most awfully quite.
U is for Utter, of words the most grand,
V is for Verses one can't understand.
W is Wotful, wan looks and regards,
X is for Xmas æstheties in cards.
Y is for "Yallery greenery" hue,
Z is for Zealots for anything new.

—S. T. OLEN.

Humorous.

If you let a man a loan, he is apt to let you alone.

A mule is unlike a poor rule, because he works both ways.

Could not the doctors' fees be justly called ill-gotten gains?

"How is business?" asked a man of a glazier. "Putty good," was the reply.

Ninety million postage stamps are sold annually. This is the country that gets in the big licks.

"I'll feed my boarders on the fat of the land," said Mrs. Stuffem, as she paid for a tub of oleomargarine.

In Ohio it is considered good luck to see a bull over the right shoulder—in case you are within ten feet of the fence.

Skinny Men.—"Wells' Health Renewer" restores health and vigor, cures Dyspepsia. $1.

"Where are the men of '76?" shrieks an excited exchange. Oh, to Halifax with the men of 76. Give us the women of 23!

For Thick Heads, heavy stomachs, biliousness, "Wells' May Apple Pills," cathartic. 10 and 25 cts.

Six men put in their capital to start a co-operative store. What was left after the manager got into Canada was valued at $25, and represented one-fifth of what each man put in. How much did the manager get away with?

DON'T DIE in the house. "Rough on Rats." Clears out rats, mice, flies, roaches, bed-bugs, &c.

A daily paper has been started in China. As soon as coal oil and the American mowing machine were introduced into that country, accidents accumulated so rapidly that a daily newspaper was necessary to keep up with them.

18 Stop Organ for $61.00.

Daniel F. Beatty, the famous Piano and Organ man, offers, in this paper an 18 Stop, 3 Sets of Reeds Organ, including Sub-Bass and Octave Coupler for only $65, and to all who order within ten days from date of this paper a further reduction of $4, thus leaving the price $61, if order is accompanied by slip cut from the advertisement. A good way to find out what paper pays, and his customers get the advantage of it. Read his advertisement, on this page, carefully, and we advise our readers to order within the 10 days of this well-known house.

Consumption Cured.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, *149 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.*

Superfluous Hair.

Madame Wambold's Specific permanently removes Superfluous Hair without injuring the skin. Send for circular. Madame WAMBOLD, 24 Sawyer Street, Boston, Mass.

Old Gold Bought.—Silver and Platinum of all kinds. Full value paid. *J. L.* Clark, Reliable Refiner of all Residues containing gold or silver, 825 Filbert St., Philadelphia, Pa. Send by mail or express. Mention THE POST.

☞ **When our readers answer any Advertisement found in these columns they will confer a favor on the Publisher and the advertiser by naming the Saturday Evening Post.**

KIDNEY-WORT

FOR THE PERMANENT CURE OF CONSTIPATION.

No other disease is so prevalent in this country as Constipation, and no remedy has ever equalled the celebrated Kidney-Wort as a cure. Whatever the cause, however obstinate the case, this remedy will overcome it.

PILES. THIS distressing complaint is very apt to be complicated with constipation. Kidney-Wort strengthens the weakened parts and quickly cures all kinds of Piles even when physicians and medicines have before failed.

☞ If you have either of these troubles

PRICE $1. USE Druggists Sell

KIDNEY-WORT

Acts at the Same Time on Kidneys, Liver and Bowels.

50 Elegant Chromos, or 50 Transparent Cards, with name on, 10 cents. M. F. MOSS, Vandalia, Ills.

NEW STYLE No. 5000.

Dimensions.—Height, 72 inches; Depth, 24 inches; Length, 49 inches; Weight, boxed, about 600 pounds.

18 Useful Stops, as Follows:

(1.) DIAPASON FORTE.
(2.) **Sub-Bass.**
(3.) PRINCIPAL FORTE.
(4.) DULCET.
(5.) DIAPASON.
(6.) **Grand Organ.**
(7.) ÆOLIAN.
(8.) **Vox Humana.**
(9.) ECHO.
(10.) DULCIANA.
(11.) CLARIONET.
(12.) **Vox Celeste.**
(13.) FLUTE FORTE.
(14.) **Octave Coupler.**
(15.) BOURDON.
(16.) **French Horn Solo**
(17.) RIGHT KNEE STOP.
(18.) **Grand Knee Stop.**

Five Octaves, Sub Walnut Case of handsome appearance, built plain, but very neat, so it will not take the dirt or dust. It contains the SWEET Vox Celeste Stop, the famous French Horn Solo Combination, New Grand Organ Right and Left Knee Stop, to control the entire motion by the knee, if necessary. Five (5) Sets of Golden Tongue Reeds, as follows: A set of powerful Sub-Bass Reeds; set of 3 Octaves of Vox Celeste, 1 set of French Horn Reeds, and 2½ Octaves each of Regular Golden Tongue Reeds. Besides all this, it will be fitted up with an Octave Coupler which doubles the power of the instrument. Lamp Stands. Pocket for Music, Beatty's Patent Stop Action, also Sounding Board, &c., &c. It has a sliding lid and conveniently arranged handles for moving. The bellows, which are of the upright pattern, are made from the best quality of rubber cloth, are of great power, and are fitted up with steel springs and the best quality of pedal straps. The Pedals, instead of being covered with carpet, are polished metal, of neat design, and never get out of repair, or foot-worn.

PRICE, boxed and delivered on cars here, with Stool, Book and Music,

ONLY $65.

☞ *I want this beautiful Parlor Organ introduced everywhere immediately, hence the following Four Dollars Deduction from Regular Price. Only a limited number will be disposed of at this remarkably low offer, and positively no order will be filled for less than $65 after the Ten Days.*

THIS SLIP IS WORTH $4

If you will clip this notice and mail it in a registered letter, together with $61.00 in money or by check on your bank), within 10 days from date of this newspaper, I hereby agree to box and ship you the above described Organ, including stool, book and music, with receipt in full for $65.

☞ If after one year's use you are not entirely satisfied, you may return the Organ at my expense, and I hereby agree to refund you your money, with interest from date of remittance. [Signed] DANIEL F. BEATTY.

Address or call upon DANIEL F. BEATTY, Washington, New Jersey.

LODER'S DIGESTIVE POWDER

SURE CURE

For Dyspepsia or Indigestion, Heartburn, Nausea, Sour Stomach, Fetid or Foul Breath, Constipation, Sick Headache, Bilious Vomiting, Vertigo, Loss of Appetite, Flatulence with frequent Belching of Wind, Oppression after Eating, Burning Sensation at the Pit of the Stomach, and all ills which drive many to despair, arising from Dyspepsia or Indigestion.

The action of these Powders is directly upon the food during the process of digestion, absorbing gases, neutralizing acid, and correcting acid secretions, promoting digestion, improving the appetite, and giving tone and vigor to the entire system.

PRICE, 50 CENTS AND $1.

By sending the amount in stamps, will be mailed to any part of the city or country. Sole depot—

C. G. A. LODER, Apothecary,
1539 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.

30 DAYS' TRIAL

BEFORE — AND — AFTER

Electric Appliances are sent on 30 Days' Trial.

TO MEN ONLY, YOUNG OR OLD,

WHO are suffering from NERVOUS DEBILITY, LOST VITALITY, LACK OF NERVE FORCE AND VIGOR, WASTING WEAKNESSES, and all those diseases of a PERSONAL NATURE resulting from ABUSES and OTHER CAUSES. Speedy relief and complete restoration of HEALTH, VIGOR and MANHOOD GUARANTEED. The greatest discovery of the Nineteenth Century. Send at once for Illustrated Pamphlet free. Address

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HOLIDAY GIFT FREE!

OUR NEW KNITTING MACHINE,

or Fine Knitter, is having an immense sale. This new KNITTING MACHINE is designed as a pleasing and useful article for ladies and children. Over 100 different articles of beautiful designs can be made with this Machine, for which there is always a ready market. The Knitters being made of a variety of colored wood and BRIGHT WIREWORK, is handsome in appearance, and guaranteed to give perfect SATISFACTION. We make a SPECIAL OFFER to the readers of this paper, to send one of our New Knitting Machines, in perfect order, by mail, for 15 Cents, or two for 25 Cents. All persons sending 25 Cents for two Knitters will receive a 64-page illustrated book, full directions, and FIVE of our SAMPLES FREE.

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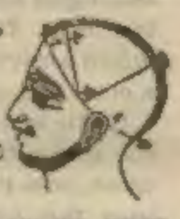

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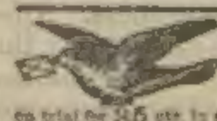

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Facetiæ.

Life opens with a rattle in the hand, and ends with a rattle in the throat.

Some men's noses are like books—the more immoral they are, the more red they are.

An editor wrote of a venerable clergyman, "He is a pretty aged minister." The compositor put it, "He is a pretty-eyed monster.

Of a general, notorious for foraging where it was safe, but who was often on the retreat, it was said that he left nothing behind but the enemy.

While putting on a clean shirt a Hartwell, Ga., man fell over a trunk and broke his collar-bone. But he says he's going to try it again when he gets well.

Salt mackerel is a new shade for men's clothing. It is probably intended for wet-weather wear, as salt mackerel is always ahead of a gum overcoat for keeping a man dry.

"How do we hear?" asks a scientist. That is easily told. Somebody tells a friend and tells him not to tell, and the friend of the teller tells a friend of ours, and he tells us; and so we hear.

Brown says he hates inquisitive people, and the worst kind of inquisitiveness, he thinks, is exhibited by the man who stops him in the street and wants to know when he is going to pay that little bill.

The Fliegend Blatter is the great German funny paper. We are are not very well up in our German to-day, but we think it means something about the fly in the butter or batter, we're not positive which.

Says a correspondent, speaking of modern French furnishing, "I find innumerable instances of modern arm-chairs covered with two sorts of material." Isn't it about time that these flings at courtship were done with?

A young American artist painted a picture of a mule so lifelike, that just as he finished the last hind leg the animal kicked him in the stomach and killed him. American art has certainly not decayed during the last decade.

A preacher not far from Boston found himself at one time in a sad dilemma. He stopped in his sermon and said: "If I speak softly, those of you who are in the rear cannot hear me; if I speak loud, I shall certainly wake up those who are close to me."

A Missouri tree has yielded 800 rails, 300 fence-posts, 16 roods of wood, 12 squirrels and one raccoon. It is supposed to have been three hundred years old. And the the man who tells the story is supposed to be one of the ablest liars in the southwest.

In a Deadwood church, the other day, the large congregation were in prayer, when an irreverent joker quite audibly whispered: "Here comes a detective." In just about seventeen seconds all of that congregation had slid through the windows except the chief elder.

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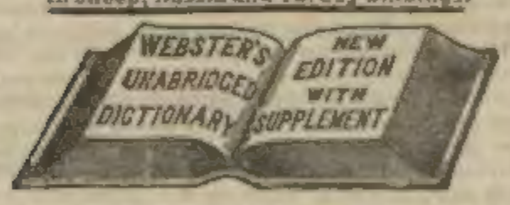

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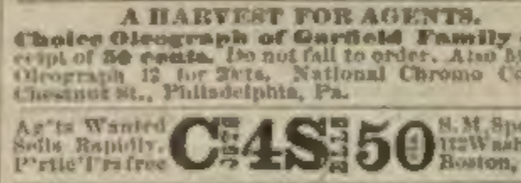

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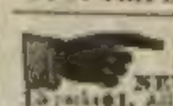

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Ladies' Department.

FASHION CHAT.

EMBROIDERY and braiding are becoming more and more fashionable for trimming dresses, as thick cloths and other woolens are succeeding the lighter stuffs of the autumn season, these being less easy to make up into puffings and gatherings.

In fact, braid work is a great resource in modern toilets.

With its help it becomes easy to freshen up a jacket, mantle or dress of a former season.

Thus, if you possess one of those short paletots, with long, narrow sleeves, which were fashionable three or four years ago, be it light or of thick cloth, or velveteen or silk velvet, you can now transform it into a chasseur, or Hungarian jacket.

Young ladies wear such jackets as bodices over any skirt. The fashion of military ornaments being very great, the braid-work upon such jackets is more especially disposed of in straight lines, which is easier to work than in an elaborate design; olive-shaped buttons and long loops of silk cord are also in much favor; the edges of the jackets are finished plain.

Again, in the deep circular of former days a short visite may easily be found; if the material is not sufficient for a visite with wide sleeves, it can be combined with satin or brocaded silk, of which sleeves and trimming can be formed.

A very elegant costume of braided cloth is made of dark olive green, trimmed with mohair braid.

The skirt is ornamented longthwise, with narrow bands of braid-work placed very close together; bent two inches from the foot of the skirt the braid is unravelled so as to form a sort of fringe.

The jacket body has an inner plastron braided all over.

The jacket basque forms a sort of drapery at the back. The epaulets and facings are trimmed with narrow bands of braiding, also finished with unraveled fringe. This is a very tasteful costume of elegant simplicity.

For plain cloth dresses made at home, Hercules braid two inches wide is the trimming.

These should have a habit basque only two inches deep on the sides, sharply pointed in front, and with the long, square middle forms of the back held in two double box pleats.

A row of the braid is across these box pleats, while the other edges of the basque are corded.

Two rows of braid outline a vest up the front and are pointed to form cuffs. The standing cadet collar is of velvet, the color of the cloth, and dull, old silver carved buttons fasten the waist.

The lower part of the skirt has a lengthwise tucked flounce half a yard deep, with only its upper half tucked, and the lower part falling in loose pleats over a box-pleated balayeuse.

The apron overskirt is draped on the lower skirt, and its edges are sewed underneath at the head of the tucked flounce. The front is much wrinkled, and has five rows of Hercules braid lengthwise from the belt to the edge.

Over this worn the new and graceful jacket mantle. This is a partly-fitted sleeveless jacket, with a mantle drapery that falls low over the arms like a dolman. It has a deep Byron collar of velvet, satin strings to tie at the throat, and two rows of wide braid for trimming.

One of the most useful walking suits is made up in striped woolen goods, with satin. The front and back of skirt are plain and of the striped fabric while the panels at the sides are formed of stripes or pleats of satin. A diagonal part of the tunic is of satin, cut up and bound around, while the scarf and drapery is in woolen goods. The stripped bodice is pointed in the back, hollowed out at the sides, and square in the front, while the pleated plastron, yoke, collar and square cuffs are in satin.

It may without hesitation be foretold that Princess dresses are coming into fashion again; this is no wonder, for they were immensely becoming to well-shaped figures.

The style is used for dressy as well as for simple toilettes, especially for dinner dresses, of which the following may be taken as an example.

It is of bright green satin with a velvet plastron and skirt of the same shade embroidered with shaded green beads, the Princess polonaise edged with a chenille band beaded in the same manner and edged with a bead fringe.

A rich scarf of beaded chenille drapes the hips, edged with a deep network bead fringe.

The cut of the dress is simple but of extraordinary elegance and taste.

There is a pretty dress of dove-colored Indian cashmere ornamented with bronze velvet.

The short skirt has three pleated flounces edged with satin, and the tunic is draped in front to meet the pleatings, being then raised behind in a very large puff to support the basque of the corsage, which is square behind and pointed in front. A Pierrot collar and cuffs of satin and lace complete the dress.

In mantles the novelty most in vogue this winter has three scarfs at the back and the Kangaroo sleeve, all kinds of fancy materials, some with most curious patterns being used for this vetement, also chequers of all sorts, rich brocades, and, above all, damask woolen materials in two colors.

After this mantle the redingote should be the first named, for it is in greater favor than ever.

A very pretty model is of dark-green cloth, the corsage being independent of the basques.

The front is buttoned in the centre instead of on one side, and over the hips is a revers coming from the front, with a bias band of velvet covering it.

The two panels or skirt lappets spread open a little in front and come from under the velvet band on the hips, the back being shaped as usual like a corsage with its small side-pieces, and the straight width which is joined to the lappets in the front is gathered in closely at the bottom of the basque.

This model is not only the newest but, what is better, the prettiest yet produced. Indeed, the two shapes we have just given are almost the only ones which have as yet secured success.

Persian and Japanese shawls embroidered with silks of a hundred shades will form one of the principal vetements of exceptional elegance this winter.

Indeed, old Japanese embroidery is of as much value as Japanese, which, as our readers well know, is more highly esteemed than any other.

These pelisse-shaped shawl-mantles will for the most part be edged with marabout in all the colors of the cashmere, in place of the lace ruchings that have been in use during the summer.

Others, we need hardly say, will be bordered with furs of value, such as blue fox, sable, marton, and seal, particularly seal and blue fox.

But the principal matter is the shape and cut of these mantles, for therein consits the style.

No mantle drapes the figure better than cashmere when it is well made; indeed, it can make even a large waist appear small and supple.

Exceedingly pretty and stylish chapeaux are being prepared for winter wear, made principally in warm, rich materials, and tastefully ornamented with feathers.

Among many lovely models lately seen is one in seal-brown plush, the brim open in front and bent down over the ears, and lined with satin with a corded piping at the edge; it is ornamented with a large cockade of loops of ribbon and with a bright-yellow plumaged bird on the left side.

A chapeau of brick-red velvet has a very high crown and somewhat poked brim, lined with puffed satin of the same color bordered with bias rouleaux of satin.

Round the crown is a drapery of ribbon velvet falling at the back in loops, and in front is a large feather pompon.

Slate, steel, or nickel-grey is a very favorite color just now, and deservedly so, as it is not only extremely becoming to most complexions but is also ladylike and distingue.

A pretty hat in this color is of straw or felt, with the brim drooping on the right side and raised on the left and lined with velvet; the strings are of grey satin, and there is a handsome plume of grey feathers.

Another very coquettish model is in mantle felt, the brim slightly raised on the left side and the felt lightly rolled back all round and lined with bottle-green velvet; a narrow bias band of the same surrounds the crown, forming a cockade in front; on the left is a plume of cocks' feathers.

Fireside Chat.

A NEW stitch is in use which is a sort of combination of feather and cross stitch and is very effective upon curves.

This consists in working stitches of varying length into and between each other, in every alternate one the thread being passed under the needle in such a way as to produce a chain stitch.

Combinations of painting and needle-work are very usual.

For instance, an exceedingly pretty lampshade is made by painting different designs upon squares of colored silk and then uniting the squares by sewing insertions of French lace round them, to which deep lace edging is afterward joined.

A still handsomer effect is given by the introduction of a pretty tatting pattern between the squares and the addition of a border of tatted medallions.

Ribbon forms quite an important feature in needle-work to-day.

Raised effects are produced by gathering ribbon about an inch wide at intervals and then forming it into the shape of a bud or flower and laying it with a few invisible stitches in the centre of a round of plush or velvet.

Very pretty scraps for the piano are made in ordinary muslin, with such raised work in ribbon carried out at the ends.

The French knot, which is used for the centres of flowers or for stamens, pistils, etc., in art embroidery, is very easily made and needs only a little care to be very effective.

In making it the thread is brought through to the front of the work and held in the left hand four or five inches from the work, while the needle is kept in the right hand.

The thread thus held in the left hand must be twisted two or three times round the needle as close to the work as possible, then the point is turned down into the material nearly, but not exactly, where the thread came up, the needle is pulled through to the other side, and the thread carefully drawn till the knot is firm.

A little practice will result in a perfect French knot.

Darning stitch is very much in use now.

Designs are worked upon Java canvas in arrasene, and the background is simply darned over quite evenly in any neutral-tinted crewel that may be preferred.

This method has entirely superseded the old-fashioned cross-stitch.

The imitation of tapestries and tapestried effects is more fashionable than ever.

A great deal of this is obtained by what is known as inlaid applique, which consists in tracing the same pattern on two materials and then carefully cutting both out, and in laying one onto the other by sewing the upper portion on to the under with thread and covering the stitches with fine cord or windings of floss silk.

Sometimes narrow ribbon or braid is stitched over the edges to keep them flat.

Oriental embroidery on thin muslin is readily imitated at home by the use of pearl and tridescent beads and velvet and plush leaves.

The raised appearance of the flowers, whether they are beads or in embroidery, is gained by padding.

Cotton wool is first sewn very firmly upon the outlined design, and then the beads are threaded in the numbers necessary and laid carefully over the padding, always being placed in one direction.

Generally, in reproducing a flower in beads the centre will be a pearl or a cluster of smaller beads to represent the raised centre of the natural flower.

Drawn work is rapidly becoming more and more fashionable.

It is trying to the eyes but so fascinating that ambitious workers are always elaborating designs in it.

It consists of drawing out the threads of fine linen, and filling in the space thus obtained by stitches of every variety.

Recently, decoration for towels and napkins has taken this form:

The threads are drawn out at regular intervals, and then a design is worked in the interstices in colored threads either in herring-bone, button-hole, or chain stitch, or by simply overcasting.

The most fascinating baby blankets are made now in fine Saxony flannel, embroidered in raised designs of flowers and birds.

The angels' heads which were so fashionable last year are scarcely seen; they are replaced by a double bordering of delicately tinted blossoms, one end being folded over and worked in such a way that it can be placed outside the coverlet.

The latest style of all adds a monogram in the centre.

Gold embroidery can seldom be satisfactorily carried out upon the material to be decorated.

The best and safest way is to work the design upon linen or crash and then cut it out and applique it on to the surface upon which it is required.

NOT GENERALLY KNOWN.—Nearly every one who is interested in gardening wants to get in a few seeds as early as possible but the soil is often too wet. Years ago says an agricultural writer, I discovered that when the ground freezes to the depth of an inch, the soil, for at least a foot under the crust, is in the best possible condition to work. The superfluous water being drawn to the surface and frozen. Early in spring, one can go out on a frosty morning with a mattock and remove the crust, dig the ground and put in peas, onions &c., although the same soil was too wet to walk on the day before.

SHEM AND JAPHET.—Will you please pass the Shem?" asked a quiet man at the lunch counter. "Haven't any!" squealed the girl in attendance. "Some Japhet?" queried the quiet man again. "Don't keep it!" squeaked the damsel. "I say," chipped in a curious passenger, "what do you mean by Shem and Japhet?" "Nothing," responded the little man, dolefully, "nothing, only the ham is so old and musty that I thought the rest of the tribe might be around here somewhere, and I'd like to see 'em?"

Correspondence.

H. H., (Petersburg, Va.)—Write again.

LINA, (Colleton, S. C.)—The eruptions and the flushing after meals are in great part produced by indigestion, for which you should consult a medical man. We should advise you not to neglect it, for indigestion is frequently the cause of many serious disorders.

C. C., (Philadelphia, Pa.)—There is nothing improper in a lady's wearing flowers every day. Some ladies do this with exquisite taste. It is not polite to laugh at other people's habits or manners. When one does that, he gives proof that his own manners need improving.

VIOLET, (Chautauqua, Pa.)—The famous Colossus of Rhodes. This island was noted for its statues, of which it is said to have possessed about 3,000, but the principal one was the Colossus. It was the enormous figure of a man 105 feet high, placed across the harbor, with a foot resting on either bank, and vessels could sail beneath the legs.

DISTRESSED, (Columbus, O.)—As you were in fault, be the first to make an advance for a return to the terms on which you formerly stood. After so many years' close acquaintance, it is a pity that your future should be broken up by a few angry words. If the gentleman declines your advances, you must sacrifice your feelings, and accept one of the other offers.

P.S., (New Castle, Del.)—There seems to be no doubt that birds and small mammals are sometimes so terrified by the appearance of a snake as to lose all power of motion, and fall a helpless prey. Although this particular fact has been observed by careful naturalists, you are quite right in being slow to believe "snake-stories." Three-fourths of them are absurd nonsense.

STUDENT, (Barton, Mo.)—There is nothing wrong in either sentence as it stands. The two sentences have different meanings. The first sentence implies that a particular capital road horse is the property of a gentleman; the second that a particular road horse is capitally suited for a gentleman. Which form of expression is the correct one depends altogether on what meaning you wish to convey.

NANCY, (Monroe, Mich.)—If you are sure you love the young man and that he loves you; if you are of age, and he is a person of good character—be very sure of the latter—why of course marry. But to test your own affection and his, it were better, perhaps, that you should wait for at least a year before giving your consent. Infatuation, you must be aware, is often mistaken for love. Take time, therefore, so that you may find out whether in your case it is not the former rather than the latter which is urging you to bestow your hand.

SARAH, (Randolph, Ind.)—Young ladies, like other people, ought to keep any engagements they make. If your visitors had such a claim on the young lady as to make it proper for her to break her engagement for the evening, she should have explained the matter fully to her escort, and obtained his permission which he, however, could not refuse to give. It would depend very much on where the party was going. In most cases it would be better for the young lady to mention to her escort her reasons for asking the other gentleman.

READER, (Philadelphia, Pa.)—Of course a man and woman acting in the way you describe would be doing very wrong; which was the more guilty would depend only on which was the tempter. There is not a single reader of the POST who could not have told you this. Unfortunately such cases have to be investigated sometimes by our judges and lawyers in the line of their duty, but pure-minded men and women do not take pleasure in examining and talking about such things, more particularly when the alleged facts rest only on mere hearsay and rumor, and would not be admitted as evidence in any court.

J. E., (Trenton, N. J.)—John Gay was born in 1688, and died in 1732, and received a magnificent burial in Westminster Abbey. His poetry is neither high nor very pure, but it has humor, is unpretentious, and pleased the great literary artists of his day. Jonathan Swift, speaking of his own death, and classing his friends, says:

> "Poor Pope will grieve a month, and Gay
> A week, and Arbuthnot a day;
> And even St. John will scarce forbear,
> To bite his pen and drop a tear."

Gay's "Fifty-one Fables in Verse" are now the best remembered of his works.

H. DAVIS, (Herkimer, N. Y.)—We think that a lover who does not write when he is away, or even answer when written to, does not deserve to be received at all when he comes back, especially by a young lady who has had as many as eighteen offers of marriage. When you see him next, unless he immediately makes offer number nineteen, you should tell him that he has missed you so little in the past, he had better try to get along without you altogether in the future, and when the next young man asks you for your love, find out what his intentions are before giving it, and then whatever happens you will, at any rate, be able to score up one more offer of marriage.

LILY, (Hardin, Ky.)—For a twelve-year old, and "five feet all but three inches" in stature, you are a darling little wonder. Your writing is bold, but you must learn to spell much better. "Gust" is not the proper way to spell "just," nor "wather" correct for "whether" in the sense which you use it. And now that we have pointed out your defects, we will answer your question. You may practice on the piano for two hours a day if you have the time to spare, but not all at once; divide it into the most convenient portions; say, previous to going to school in the morning (supposing that you are not a boarder) and in the evening.

A. T., (Addison, Vt.)—We cannot tell certainly what the young lady means by her conduct, more particularly as a man in love is apt to be a little imaginative about anything the beloved object of his affections does or says, and his accounts of her are sometimes a little untrustworthy in consequence. But we can tell you what is the proper course for you to pursue; tell the young lady frankly that you love her, and want her to make you the happiest man in all the world by promising to marry you, then, if you are lucky enough to get her consent, make up your mind to be the best husband in the State, or out of it. If, on the other hand, you find that, however much she likes you, she does not like you well enough to marry you, don't despair. Work hard, save up money, open a correspondence with some aunt or cousin elsewhere, where there are three nice girls for one good man, and seek for better luck next time.